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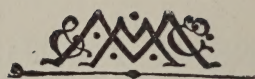
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DIVERSIONS OF A MUSIC-LOVER



A MUSIC-LOVER

OF

BY

C. L. GRAVES

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NOTE

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C. L. G.

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PART I

I

THE VOICES OF THE ORCHESTRA

MANY of our readers are probably familiar with the historic passage in Schumann's letters in which, writing on 11th December, 1839, he describes his impressions on hearing Schubert's C Major Symphony for the first time. One phrase, that in which he speaks of its "heavenly length"—*himmlische Länge*—has become proverbial; but even happier, as a piece of characterisation, is the remark that the instruments seem all to be endowed with human voices. Yet although they perhaps sound more human in the symphonies of Schubert than in the works of any other composer—his horns, woodwind, and trombones do not merely talk, but converse—the instruments of the modern orchestra always exhibit an affinity with various types of humanity,—of both sexes and widely differing tempera-

ments. The violin is commonly called the king of instruments, and the title may be admitted as indicating its supremacy. But viewed as a voice, the violin is the prima donna of the orchestra. To it are assigned all the *beaux rôles*,—the most brilliant roulades, cadenzas, and embellishments, the most perilous ascents into aerial altitudes. And the voice of the violin—which has ingeniously been declared to bear much the same relation to the passionless tones of the flute as the voice of a woman to that of a boy—varies in its intellectual and emotional expressiveness, according to the skill of the player and the demands of the composer, as much as a Viardot differs from a Melba. It soars to angelic, to superhuman heights in, say, the Prelude to *Lohengrin*, and yet all the time contains in itself possibilities of feline or wolfish ululation. *Triste loupus—fidibus*: every fiddle is said to have a wolf, just as the “goose” lurks in every clarinet—in France, however, they talk of the *couac* of the *clarinettes canardes*—while Berlioz describes how, when he had a separate rehearsal for thirty-six double-basses, preparatory to a performance of the C Minor Symphony at the Industrial Exhibition of 1844, when they came to the Scherzo it

was "like the grunting of about fifty ferocious wild boars." But it is only in its weaker and unworthier moments that the infra-human character of the orchestra betrays itself. Its natural history is accidental, not essential. Descending from the violin to the viola, we cannot but be struck by the unassertiveness of this beautiful instrument. It is not often that one meets a viola player who adopts the career of the virtuoso,—perhaps because with the exception of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* there is no orchestral work of first-rate importance in which the central rôle is assigned to that instrument. Indifferently described as the alto or tenor, the viola is of all stringed instruments the one most readily mistaken for a human voice. The 'cello, however, is *the* singer *par excellence* of the orchestra; the perfect representative of the *cantabile* style. What lessons in phrasing may not vocalists derive from such players—to mention the first that occur to us—as M. Gérardy, Herr Hugo Becker, or Mr. W. H. Squire! Almost the only fault that one has to find with the most accomplished 'cellists is their comparative neglect of the lowest register of the instrument and their efforts, in the choice of

show-pieces, to emulate the qualities of the violin. Thus one of the greatest living performers on this instrument is said to amuse himself at home by playing Paganini's violin concertos on the 'cello. So Bottesini, the famous double-bass player, was habitually wont to mimic the fiddle on his instrument, which, by the way, was not a true double-bass, but about half-way in size between it and the 'cello. The real beauty as well as the utility of the double-bass, the *basso profondo* of the string band, is often overlooked. How splendidly rich and full is its *pizzicato*, often undistinguishable from a drum tap! And how much of the sombreness and picturesque savagery of the modern Russian music depends on the use of the basses.

The flute, the leader of the woodwind quartet, may fairly be described as the "royal and ancient" instrument. On one of the tombs in the pyramids of Gizeh—dating back to 2000 B.C., or earlier—there is a representation of a band of eight flutes. Rossini's historic reply to the query, What is worse than a flute solo? naturally recurs to the mind in this connection. But the gibe is most unjust, as those who

of late years have so often listened to the lovely duet for two flutes in the *Danse des Mirlitons* in Tschaikowsky's *Casse-Noisette* suite will readily admit. Besides, the flute is the only instrument on which a really great sovereign and commander attained proficiency. Moreover, Frederick the Great not only played the flute, but composed for it, and composed uncommonly well. Gluck wrote the most angelic music for it in his *Orpheus*; Schumann speaks of its "ethereal tones." But in this country, until quite recently, flute-playing was regarded as the recreation of incompetent amateurs and pale young curates. It is true that you cannot breathe passion into the flute, that it has no *Sehnsucht* in its accents, that its gradations of colour are limited. But what charm, elegance, and freshness a fine flautist of the French school has at his command! Fifty years ago Berlioz—an impartial and supremely competent judge—declared that nowhere was the flute played as at Paris, and the statement holds good to-day. M. Taffanel, a fine musician and experienced conductor as well as a great *virtuoso*, stands in a class by himself. The element of poignancy, entirely absent from the placid tones of the flute,

is more acutely present in the accents of the oboe than in those of any other instrument. It is above all others the voice of complaint. Again, there is perhaps no wind instrument in regard to which the difference between amateurs and professionals is more strongly marked—the tone emitted by the former being invariably mean, wizened, and shrill—or, indeed, between the professionals themselves, for, to take concrete examples, what could be more utterly unlike than the tones emitted by Mr. Malsch and by Mr. Lalande,—both admirable artists, the one excelling in classical purity of phrasing, the other in romantic fervour of expression? The timbre of the oboe depends, of course, a good deal on the nature of the reed employed. But more depends on the temperament of the player. A fine artist so far neutralises the mechanical limitations common to all keyed instruments as to convey the impression that his instrument is part of himself. Mr. Lalande, for example, recalls to us the grotesque image applied to the famous clarinet player, Herr Mühlfeld, that he resembled an elephant playing on its trunk. Of the *cor anglais*, or tenor oboe, it is enough to say that it achieves what is denied to the human

voice in singing or speaking,—it lends a romantic charm to a distinctly nasal tone. As the oboe is the voice of unrest, of complaint, of discontent, the clarinet shares with the horn and the 'cello the rôle of consolation and persuasion. Far more human than the flute, it has at command serener accents than those of the oboe: while less poignant, it is more tender in expression, though capable of uttering a veritable *cri de cœur*,—witness the famous clarinet quintet of Brahms (op. 115). Furthermore, on the *corruptio optimi pessima* principle, the clarinet, as we have already seen, can exchange its dove-like notes for the “quack” of the goose. In his realistic efforts to portray the unearthly notes of the *obscae volucres* in Faust's ride to the abyss, it is on the weird yelping tones of the clarinet that Berlioz chiefly relies, just as Richard Strauss assigns to it the bizarre theme expressive of the hero in his *Till Eulenspiegel*. Of the bass clarinet with its awe-inspiring yet enchanting tones, as of the *cor anglais*, one can never think without recalling certain strains from *Tristan und Isolde*. Only partially musical people regard the bassoon solely as “the humourist of the orchestra,” much as the

trombone is with equal injustice regarded as a musical buffoon. It is simply because in either case the step from the sublime to the ridiculous is easier than in that of other instruments. The bassoon can be legitimately humorous, but, like many humorists, before and after Grimaldi, is possessed by a spirit of melancholy, a fact of which Beethoven took deliberate heed in assigning some of his most pathetic melodies to its hoarse but strangely affecting tones. The bassoon, it may be added, is the only modern orchestral instrument (using the adjective in its technical sense) mentioned in a standard quotation, and it is obvious that Coleridge took the conventional view of the bassoon as a minister of mirth.¹ Passing "out of the wood" into the

¹ As Mr. E. A. Duff has pointed out to me, "loudness" is not at all a characteristic quality of the bassoon: in fact, a "loud bassoon" would be something like a steam foghorn. "No wonder," he continues, "the wedding guest beat his breast when he heard it. A similar misconception of this instrument occurs in Tennyson's *Maud* at the lines

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon

(surely an unusual combination for a quadrille band), followed by 'the dancers dancing in tune.' Whether the unfortunate bassoon is lugged in to rhyme with tune, or *vice versa*, must be left to the critics to determine. The fact is that a large number of otherwise well-informed people hold strongly to the idea that the bassoon is a stringed instrument, confusing it perhaps with the double-bass; and I have more than once been gravely corrected for referring to it as part of the wind."

brass, we encounter in the trumpet a voice pre-eminently fitted by its fierce clangour—

aere ciere viros Martemque accendere cantu,

and therefore much in evidence at the present moment. Unfortunately in too many orchestras this noble instrument—noblest of all in the slide pattern, but still noble in the form known as the valve, or, as Berlioz calls it, the cylinder or chromatic trumpet—has been superseded by the *cornet-à-pistons*, whose “incredible popularity” roused Berlioz’s wrath nearly sixty years ago. For the cornet has an incurably vulgar voice, and we have the fullest sympathy with the inwardness of that laconic epitaph—a masterpiece of the art of omission—alleged to have been engraved on the tomb of an Irishman :—

PATRICK O’RAFFERTY.

His neighbour played the cornet.

The cornet is only endurable in a *tutti*. In a solo its expression almost invariably degenerates into bleating sentimentality.

Whether because of its association with the chase of the deer, or because one of its forms is known as the Waldhorn, or because of some

subtle intrinsic affinity, the horn always suggests the serene beauty of the woodland. And yet this idyllic, amiable instrument, by the simple process of muting, can be made to speak with the most malign and sinister accents. Hence the extraordinarily effective use which Wagner has made of the muted horn as the harbinger of ill. Lastly, the horn has a special personal interest because it was as a player on that beautiful instrument in the orchestra of the Kärntnerthor Theatre that Hans Richter entered on his musical career. He played the trumpet at the historical first performance of the "Siegfried Idyll," in December, 1870, and, if he cannot play every other instrument in the orchestra, as is often averred, at any rate he not only knows how they ought to be played, but exactly what can and what cannot be done on each instrument. The trombone is specially interesting as it is practically the only wind instrument now left in its natural condition, and not furnished with simplifying mechanism. To this immunity it probably owes the unimpaired splendour of the tones which commended it so peculiarly to Gluck, to Mozart, and to Schubert. Mendelssohn's remark as to the reverence with

which its solemn tones should be employed is justly admired, and on another occasion he admitted it, by implication, along with other wind instruments, into heaven, on condition that they never got behind the beat. The bass tuba, which serves as double-bass to the brass group, is so commonly alluded to as the tuba *tout court* that its nomenclature is rather unfortunate. For this is not the *tuba mirum spargens sonum per sepulcra regionum*, or the instrument which Ennius immortalised in the unforgettable line—

At tuba terribili sonitu taratantara dixit.

It is a big brass instrument, derived from the bombardon, resembling it in appearance, and furnished with a mechanism of valves which gives it an extensive compass in the bass.

The drum and the harp complete the regular forces of the orchestra. The latter is at once the largest, the most picturesque, and—for its size—the weakest instrument in the orchestra, though perfectly invaluable for creating an atmosphere and, in its delicate harmonics, for simulating the faint notes of elf-land. The drum, one of the most inflammatory of in-

struments, was emancipated from its purely subordinate position by Beethoven—who, by the way, always mentally heard his melodies in the tones of some particular instrument and not of the human voice—and raised to the rank of a soloist. Berlioz has not only left on record his written appreciation of the gorgeous effects it produces, but scored his works lavishly and elaborately for the instrument which more than any other links primitive with modern musical culture. Tausch, who succeeded Schumann as Kapellmeister at Düsseldorf, wrote a concerto for five kettledrums, which was performed several years ago in London by an accomplished amateur, but the achievement belonged to the domain of gymnastic (in the modern sense) rather than of music, and to this day we vividly recall the maze of drumsticks and flying coat-tails presented by the acrobatic performer. To judge from their passion for the instruments of percussion, we should not be surprised if one of the young Russian school were to give us a concerto for the tam-tam.

II

RICHARD STRAUSS

“BEWARE,” wrote a French essayist, “of irrevocably condemning what our grandchildren are very likely to applaud.” It really looks as if some of our excellent critics had taken this admirable warning almost too deeply to heart. Twice bit thrice shy. The intelligent amateurs of to-day are so morbidly anxious to prove their penetration, and avoid the mistake which their fathers and grandfathers made over Wagner, and their great-grandfathers over Beethoven, that they are more likely to mistake talent, or even charlatanry, for genius than *vice versa*. Rather than stultify themselves by failing to recognise the real thing, they are ready to hail a new lineal descendant of Wagner or Beethoven once every five years. A few years ago the output of inspired composers was entirely supplied by

Italy,—Mascagni, Leoncavallo, Puccini, Perosi. In the latest and most formidable product, *grande et conspicuum nostro quoque tempore monstrum*, Richard Strauss, Germany once more asserts her pre-eminence. A few cautious and inhospitable voices, it is true, have been raised in protest against the chorus of acclamation with which his works have been greeted in our midst, but they have been practically overborne by the more strident accents of eulogy. This is, after all, only what might be expected. Richard Strauss is pre-eminently the *dernier cri* in instrumental music,—louder, more strenuous, more complex, more rebellious than any of his predecessors, owing much to Wagner (compared with whom he occupies a position somewhat similar to that in which Gorky stands to Tolstoy), yet not only associating himself with the philosophy of Wagner's most irreverent assailant, Nietzsche, but boldly transgressing the principles laid down with such admirable clearness by Wagner himself :—

“When occasion offered I could venture to depict strange, and even terrible, things in music, because the action rendered such things comprehensible ; but music apart from the drama cannot risk this, for fear of

becoming grotesque. I am afraid my scores will be of little use to composers of instrumental music ; they cannot bear condensation, still less dilution ; they are likely to prove misleading, and had better be left alone."

Wagner, as he said to Mr. Dannreuther, was, in regard to instrumental music, "a *réactionnaire*, a conservative. I dislike everything," he continued, "that requires a verbal explanation beyond the actual sounds." He cordially admitted the great ability of Berlioz, whose scores he studied with the utmost care, but, as he adds, quite as much with a view to learning what to avoid as what to imitate. It is hardly necessary to inform our readers that the attitude adopted by Richard Strauss is diametrically opposed in this respect to that of Richard Wagner. What he deliberately sets himself to do is that which Wagner so unhesitatingly condemns, viz., to depict "strange, and even terrible, things" in music without scenic accessories, action, or the spoken word. Though his verbal explanations may not equal in minuteness those of Berlioz, they are at least as essential to the adequate comprehension of the musical content of his composition as those

of the French master. It is difficult, if not actually impossible, to reconcile this view of the function of the orchestra with that which denies to instrumental music, when shorn of the accessories already enumerated, a precise or articulate language. There are many people who still hold that absolute music represents the highest product of the art because it gives utterance to the ineffable—to thoughts and emotions and workings of our consciousness which speech is powerless to express; and further, that the attempt to attach a precise meaning to a musical phrase is rendered futile by the common experience that no two persons will visualise the simplest piece of music in the same way. Given the action and scenic accessories, Wagner's system of leading motives is intelligible and defensible enough. But take away these adjuncts, and the strain imposed upon the unaided orchestra is more than it can bear. In a huge practical joke like *Till Eulenspiegel*, which is largely musical narration, or incident-painting, the process of translation into terms of sound cannot be regarded as so very arduous an undertaking. Besides, we are forbidden by the serious partisans of Strauss to regard *Till Eulenspiegel*

as a really typical specimen of his genius. It is only a *tour de force*, an irresponsible ebullition of his salad days. He is rather to be judged by works in which the emotional, psychological, or philosophical significance predominates, of which *Ein Heldenleben* is perhaps the ripest, or, at any rate, the most familiar, example. Yet even here the plain person cannot avoid certain misgivings as to the entire seriousness of the composer. Herr Strauss is, from all accounts, a man of most engaging personality, genial in manner, and unaffected in disposition. Yet if the *Hero's Life* is to be accepted as a serious study in musical psychology, the "programme" can only be regarded as a piece of colossal effrontery. For internal evidence, coupled with additional information volunteered to interviewers by the composer, makes it irresistibly evident that the hero is none other than Richard Strauss himself. Thus when that hero adopts an introspective and retrospective attitude, his musings are expressed by exhaustive citations from Strauss's earlier works. Every creator puts himself more or less into his work. But in the whole annals of art we know of no instance of a really great genius who not only wrote his autobiography

but labelled it "The Life of a Hero," and we shudder to think of the animadversions which would have been showered on any native composer who ventured on so assertive a manifestation of egoism. But of course we shall be met with the reply that *quod licet Jovi non licet bovi*, —or, to attempt a free translation, that what is permissible to the Olympian Teuton is not permissible to plain John Bull. Richard Strauss, it will be contended, is a genius of such commanding stature that he may safely be allowed to be a law unto himself. This assumption induces one to venture on a tentative examination of his credentials.

That he has remarkable and striking qualities must be readily admitted by the most prejudiced witness. In an age when every one knows how to score he is confessedly conspicuous by his masterly handling of the immense resources of the modern orchestra. In an age dominated by the momentous achievements of Wagner and the barbaric splendours of Tschaikowsky he has yet contrived to inspire the jaded concert-goer with a new thrill. His prodigious technique, his wonderful manipulation of the machinery of the art, renders

him profoundly interesting even to those experts who deny him the divine gift of melody. In an age permeated by what an American critic has happily designated "Jumbomania," or the worship of mammoth proportions, he commands especial attention by the grandiosity of his conceptions, the strenuousness of his style, the sonority of his utterance. He paints, as Rubinstein said of other moderns, with all the colours in his palette. He is a veritable Kaiser Wilhelm II. of composers. All this may be readily admitted, but as to his capacity of submitting to the crucial test of true greatness, as opposed to impressive grandiosity, there is at least room for considerable doubt. The weakest joint in his harness has already been indicated in the searching remarks of Wagner quoted above. That he has an intermittent sense of beauty is not to be denied. But surely no one has ever acted more uncompromisingly on the principle which Rossini was incorrectly alleged to have formulated in the saying *Dans la musique de Wagner il y a de beaux moments mais de mauvais quarts-d'heure*. (When Rossini was taxed with this *bon mot*, he indignantly repudiated it, exclaiming that he never could have said such a thing of one who

had done so much to enlarge the boundaries of art.) The method adopted by Strauss might not unfairly be called the Sahara method,—that of presenting arid wastes diversified by an occasional green oasis of melody, which is rendered all the more attractive by the prevailing desolation of its surroundings. That strange and terrible things may be depicted in music is in certain circumstances a legitimate contention. But it is at least disputable whether the true impressiveness of this *terribilità* is attained by indulgence in such prolonged exhibitions of unmitigated ugliness as occur in the most important works of Strauss.

A test of greatness to which, almost without exception, the great masters can be subjected is the test of reduction. That is to say, if a work has the root of the matter in it, its character will not altogether disappear in a pianoforte version. True, you cannot reproduce the colour and richness of Wagner's scores on that useful but imperfect instrument, but at least the melody remains. Can any one contend that much would remain of the work of Strauss when shorn and stripped of its tremendous orchestral trappings?—It may be incidentally

noted that in *Ein Heldenleben* the quotations from his own works are, with one exception, so undistinguished and lacking in individuality as to be almost unrecognisable.—Time, the great sifter of reputations, will tell, and may tell a different story from that of either the admirers or detractors of Strauss. For ourselves, we cannot resist the inclination to regard him as strangely typical of a situation recently summed up in conversation by a distinguished and learned German man of letters. “What German music wants,” he observed, “is to go to sleep for a hundred years. Its possibilities have been exhausted in one direction by Wagner, in another by Brahms. It is showing the inevitable sign of an epoch of exhaustion,—a tendency to run riot in complexity of detail and rococo extravagance. The great man will come in time, but he cannot be expected until the nation has had a rest.” What is true of individuals is true of the evolution of art. Great men very rarely have great sons, least of all in art; and after the wonderful efflorescence of musical genius which began with Bach and ended with Wagner and Brahms, it is hardly reasonable to expect the immediate emergence of a lineal descendant to

that mighty line. Count von Bülow may deny the impeachment of Byzantinism in German politics, but we do not feel sure that it is not to be found in the last phase of German music, which irresistibly recalls that strange but impressive saying of another German author: "There is nothing so repulsive in nature as the enthusiasm of a cold heart."

ENVOY

TO RICHARD STRAUSS

Great anarch, whose truculent numbers,
 Abounding in *Donner* and *Blitz*,
 Have startled the sane from their slumbers,
 And frightened thy foes into fits ;
 All hail ! O ineffable hero,
 Of stature so terribly tall,
 Ev'ry other composer from NERO
 To SOUSA looks small !

Our innocent fathers, adoring
 The simple Handelian theme,
 Knew not that elaborate scoring
 All absence of charm could redeem.
 But the epoch of HALLÉS and HULLAHS
 Is long irretrievably flown,
 And the maddest of musical MULLAHS
 Is monarch alone.

Beguiled by the obsolete fiction
 That art was intended to please,
 We cherished the crazy conviction
 That discord was kin to disease ;
 Now spurning the base and insidious
 And honeyed allurements of Tune,
 We welcome at last in the Hideous
 Art's ultimate boon.

We are faint with insatiate hunger
 For food that is racy and rank ;
 O ransom us, RICHARD the Younger,
 From life that is blameless and blank !
 Breathe on us the blast of the blizzard,
 Pour poisonous drugs in our cup,
 Stick pins in us, down to the gizzard,
 And make us sit up !

Too long have we slavishly swallowed
 Mild MENDELSSOHN's saccharine Psalms ;
 Too long have contentedly followed
 The footsteps of WAGNER and BRAHMS.
 O free us from all that is formal,
 O banish the ways that are plain,
 Eliminate all that is normal,
 And make us insane.

We are cloyed with the cult of the Russian,
 We are sick of the simple, the bland ;
 We long for persistent percussion,
 For brass that is gruesomely grand.
 O teach us that discord is duty,
 That Melody maketh for sin,
 Come down and redeem us from beauty,
 Great despot of din !

III

THE COST OF A PRIVATE ORCHESTRA

A FEW years ago Lord Meath contributed to the *Times* a letter in which he set down a list of practical hints for benevolent millionaires,—indications of the ways in which they might benefit the community by the purchase or preservation of open spaces, playgrounds, etc. The notion was excellent, though the range of suggestions was limited and lacking in picturesqueness, and it has often occurred to us that it might be not unprofitably supplemented by further hints, in which a less rigorous appeal should be made to the purely altruistic instincts of the man with more money than he quite knows what to do with. As a practical contribution to this problem we propose to give an approximate estimate of what it would cost to keep a private orchestra, a luxury which, as we

hope to be able to show, is quite compatible with giving a great deal of pleasure to the outside public as well as to one's friends and neighbours. There is, of course, nothing new in the idea, the classical example being furnished by the great Esterhazy family, the patrons of Haydn, who maintained on their country place at Esterháza an orchestra and chorus, and engaged solo singers for the performance of church music, concerts, and operas. What the "Father of the Symphony" owed to his opportunities is best set forth in his own words:—"My Prince was always satisfied with my works: I not only had the encouragement of constant approval, but as conductor of an orchestra I could make experiments, observe what produced an effect and what weakened it, and was thus in a position to improve, alter, make additions or omissions, and be as bold as I pleased; I was cut off from the world, there was no one to confuse or torment me, and I was forced to become *original*." We have no exact means of determining what the Esterhazys spent yearly on their orchestra, which was of modest dimensions—probably never exceeding twenty players—but Prince Nicolaus (Haydn's

especial friend) had the reputation of giving unusually high terms, and Haydn's own salary, as times went, was on a liberal scale. The services of the band were exclusively retained during their engagement, and as the Prince seldom left his country seat, for the greater part of the year the singers and musicians were tied to one spot, very few of them being allowed to bring their wives or families. Other instances may be found of foreign nobles who have kept private bands in Germany, France, and the Netherlands — Southey in his *Commonplace Book* relates an anecdote of an eccentric aristocrat in the Low Countries who used at intervals to order his orchestra to give a concert to his horses—but it is a curious fact that no English or American millionaire in these latter days, when Bayreuth has become the fashion, and Mayfair has renounced the attitude of “a damned fiddler—a fellow I despise”—has ever thought of maintaining a private band. The nearest approach to it that we know of is the action of a great ironmaster in Lancashire who used to encourage the practice of instrumental music amongst his employees, provided them with instruments and tuition, and was

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responsible for any deficit arising from the public performance of oratorios in his town at which the aforesaid employees, strengthened by some professional assistance, rendered a very creditable account of the orchestral accompaniments. Another public-spirited amateur in the North of England performs a somewhat similar service in connection with a small local festival, which he "runs" for the benefit of the neighbourhood. But in the one case the band is practically an amateur band: in the other the instrumental forces are only brought together on the occasion of the festival. The example of Prince Esterhazy and other German Princes has had no imitators in modern England, though in the course of the London season as much money is often spent on a musical party, at which three or four operatic "stars" are engaged, as would pay for half-a-dozen, or even ten, orchestral concerts with a band of fifty or sixty players. Fees of 100 to 500 guineas, and even upwards, are not by any means unheard of at such entertainments.

In regard to the engagement of a private orchestra it must be conceded that the conditions which rendered the post of composer-conductor

so favourable to the expansion of genius, are well-nigh incapable of being reproduced in modern England. A residential orchestra, forming part of the household, is practically out of the question now for two reasons. A millionaire, if he chose to pay a fancy price, could no doubt secure the exclusive services of a band of first-rate musicians—it would cost him at least £10,000 a year in salaries alone, exclusive of that of the conductor—but the other demands on his leisure, and the constant change of residence due to modern facilities of travel and the duties of his position, would render the possession a burdensome luxury. On the one hand the players would demand exceptional terms to induce them to forgo other engagements, and on the other the patron, in virtue of his social environment and responsibilities, is no longer able to live the sort of life which allows of the constant or daily enjoyment of orchestral music provided by musicians forming part of the household. Our millionaire must be content with retaining the services of a band only for certain days or evenings, and it will probably suit his convenience that the necessary rehearsing shall take place off the premises. As a matter

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of practical politics it means that the band will only play for him while he is in London, or at such of his country houses as are not more than a hundred miles from town. To come, then, to the question of pounds, shillings, and pence, it must be premised that no absolutely fixed *data* are available on which to found our estimate, for the reason that there is no orchestra in existence permanently retained on precisely similar terms to those sketched out. The only practical basis is the cost of orchestral concerts at which a band of any given number of players can be engaged. This works out roughly at an average of a guinea per head for rank-and-file, and an average of 2 or 3 guineas for principals. The fee includes a single rehearsal, a third part of the fee being added if another rehearsal is demanded. In other words, the cost of a band of seventy-five players for a single performance may be roughly put down at 100 guineas, that of a band of sixty at 75 to 80 guineas, and that of a band of forty at between 50 and 60 guineas. In the case of performances outside the Metropolitan area, players are allowed hotel expenses, as well as their railway fares, so that, even allowing for the reduced rates which the

companies would doubtless grant, the cost of a performance in the country would be not far short of double that given in London. There remains the salary of a conductor, as to which it is difficult to speak with absolute precision. If engaged by the night, a thoroughly competent *chef d'orchestre* could probably be obtained at a fee of from 15 to 20 guineas, but it would probably be better policy for our millionaire to import a first-rate conductor from abroad at a fixed salary, and we have little doubt that he could be got for £500 a year, provided he were allowed to accept other engagements and to teach in his spare time. On this basis a millionaire could allow himself the luxury of fifty orchestral concerts in the year, on the assumption that twenty-five were given in London and twenty-five in the country, at a mean cost for a band of seventy-five players of 150 guineas per concert plus the salary of the conductor; if only fifty players were employed the average would be 100 guineas, and if forty, say 80 guineas. As a matter of fact, if so large a number of engagements were guaranteed, the players would most likely accept a certain reduction, so that our totals of 7500 guineas plus

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£500, 5000 guineas plus £500, and 4000 guineas plus £500 probably represent in each case a considerably larger sum than would be actually necessary. Again, we have given the number of concerts at fifty, or, roughly speaking, one a week ; whereas the engagements of our millionaire would probably render it difficult for him to arrange for more than half that number. On this reduced scale, it works out that our wealthy enthusiast could have twenty-five orchestral concerts with an orchestra of from forty to fifty players, for an annual outlay of not more than £3000, or very little more than half of what it would cost him to maintain a first-class racing yacht.

It may be pointed out, in conclusion, that the amount of pleasure which the possessor of a private orchestra would have it in his power to bestow on the public would be very considerable. Primarily, no doubt, his band would play for the entertainment of himself and his guests ; but when he was in the country he would, assuming him to be not less hospitable than the generality of county magnates, occasionally invite the countryside to attend his concerts, or, better still, lend his band to take part in the

performance by local choral societies of oratorios and cantatas, and so help to relieve what is always the most serious drain on the finances of such associations. Lastly, our millionaire—though really he need not be a full-blown millionaire to indulge in this hobby—would be able to lend the best form of encouragement to aspiring talent, as it would be an essential part of the business of his conductor or “Master of the Music” to discover novelties, and, where they deserved it, to include them in his programmes. Finally, private orchestras, such as we have indicated above, would, so far as we can see, offer opportunities to female players of ability which have hitherto been denied them in the great professional orchestras—always excepting harpists. No one who has heard the band of the Royal College of Music can entertain any doubt as to the efficiency and musicianship of the female orchestral player—of strings at any rate—and at least one of our leading composers and conductors is of opinion that the wholesale embargo on women in the professional orchestras cannot be justified on artistic grounds, his own experience being that they play just as well and give less trouble.

IV

GIUSEPPE VERDI

IF a man is to be deemed fortunate in proportion to the amount of journalistic attention he receives immediately on his decease, then Verdi, though Fortunino in his birth certificate, cannot be called fortunate in the opportunity of his death. It was inevitable that in an hour of world-wide mourning his passing should be to a certain extent overlooked.¹ Though art is international, the removal of a commanding personality in the domain of *Weltpolitik* must necessarily and rightly make a deeper impact on the minds of men than the removal of even so striking a figure as that of Verdi. Yet in all other ways his end was worthy, and even enviable. He died full of years and honours, after such an Indian summer of creative power as has

¹ Verdi died shortly after Queen Victoria.

fallen to the lot of no other composer in all the annals of music. He was not only spared that consciousness of failing powers, which saddens the close of so many noble lives, but it was granted to him between the age of sixty and eighty to conquer the admiration of his detractors, to eclipse the fame of compatriots young enough to be his grandchildren; in a word, to transcend the lot of ordinary humanity and exhibit in extreme old age the buoyancy, the vitality, and the elasticity of extreme youth.

Though many men have been the artificers of their fortunes in the musical calling, Verdi's rise to fame is perhaps a more striking example of the *carrière ouverte aux talents* than any other to be found in the records of the art he has so conspicuously adorned. There is no trace of his owing anything to heredity. Two other distinguished musicians of the nineteenth century were the sons respectively of a butcher and a baker. Verdi's father, if he was not a candlestick maker, at least sold candles in the little *osteria*, half inn, half grocer's shop at Roncole, a small hamlet in the Duchy of Parma. And when by dint of sheer native talent, the resolute use of every opportunity that fell in his

way, and the generous assistance of some local patrons, this musical Giotto made his way to Milan and obtained a hearing at the Conservatoire, the authorities refused him admittance on the score of incapacity. To privation and disappointment severe domestic bereavement had yet to be added before Verdi set foot on the lowest rung of the ladder of fame. When his fortunes were at their lowest ebb, he lost his wife and both his children in the space of a few weeks, and then, by a cruel irony of fate, was commissioned to write a comic opera. In a sense, Verdi never recovered from the accumulated calamities of his youth. Naturally reserved, he had "eaten his bread with tears," and remained all his life unmoved by the flood-tide of success, despising the "pap of praise" as heartily as Scott, a grave, taciturn, dignified, impenetrable figure, coldly magnanimous in speech, though generous in action, and incapable of gaiety save in rare moments of his music. If one may be allowed to borrow a political analogue, Verdi conquered Italy somewhat in the same way that Parnell conquered Ireland, by the display of a combination of qualities diametrically opposed to those traditionally

associated with the country to which he belonged. His position at the outset of his career was defined accurately enough many years ago by a French critic, M. Denne Baron, in the following terms :—"At the period when Verdi began to write for the stage, the influence of foreign literature and new artistic theories had prompted the Italian composers to resort to the vehement expression of the passions, and to abandon the portraiture of delicate and amiable sentiments for that of the sombre transports of the soul. A serious-minded man, and endowed with a rich imagination, Verdi became the chief of the new school; his music is strongly marked and dramatic, and it was by virtue of his vigour, energy, verve, a certain harshness, and tendency towards powerful effects of sonority that he won an immense popularity in his native land, where up to that time no one had ever succeeded except by charm, by suavity, and by wealth of melody." One has only to look to the librettos of his early operas to admit the justice of these remarks. Indifferent as their literary quality in Italian often was, they were drawn from Byron (the *Corsair*), from Victor Hugo (*Rigoletto* and *Ernani*), from Schiller (*I*

Masnadieri), from Guttierrez (*Trovatore*), Dumas (*Traviata*), and Shakespeare (*Macbeth*). He seldom, if ever, inclined to the pseudo-classicism of his predecessors,—the endless Medeas, Horatii and Curiatii, and all the other stock subjects of eighteenth-century opera. The themes that, above all, attracted him were gloomy, sinister, and tragic. It was the *terribilità* of Michelangelo that made the great Florentine his favourite sculptor, and we learn from M. Pougin's biography that he projected an opera on the story of Cain. *Macbeth* he set to music as early as 1847, and though forty years elapsed before he turned again to the same source, it was once more a Shakespearian tragedy—*Othello*—that fired his inspiration. And if the literary tendency of the time combined with his own temperament to impel him to the choice of strong and sombre arguments, his keen sympathy with his down-trodden countrymen tended still further to render the prophesying of smooth things distasteful. It was a mere coincidence that made the letters of his name a symbol of revolt, but none the less it seems certain that he deliberately used his genius as a means of fanning the flame of patriotism; and though

when summoned by Cavour to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate he amused himself by setting the agenda to music, he is said to have observed that he would have given all his operas to be able to make a single speech,—which he never did.

Crude, vehement, and coarse-fibred though much of Verdi's early music was, he even then showed a readiness, rarer among Italian than any other composers, to sacrifice beauty to truth of characterisation. In regard to the sonority of his music, precisely the same attacks that had been made on Rossini—*vide* Lord Mount-Edgumbe's *Reminiscences*—and were to be made thirty or forty years later on Wagner, were made on Verdi. He was condemned in certain circles as only capable of writing "Janissary music," and students of Browning need not to be reminded of the famous passage in "Bishop Blougram's Apology," which lends a literary permanence to this view :—

I pine among my million imbeciles
(You think) aware some dozen men of sense
Eye me and know me, whether I believe
In the last winking Virgin, as I vow,
And am a fool, or disbelieve in her,
And am a knave,—approve in neither case,

Withhold their voices though I look their way ;
Like Verdi when, at his worst opera's end,
(The thing they gave at Florence,—what's its name ?)
While the mad houseful's plaudits near out-bang
His orchestra of salt-box, tongs and bones,
He looks through all the roaring and the wreaths
Where sits Rossini patient in his stall.

One wonders whether Browning ever heard *Otello*. Certainly he did not live to hear *Falstaff*, or he might have been moved to recast an allusion rendered grossly unfair by the exquisite delicacy and distinction of Verdi's ripest manner. In this context it is right to recall the singular recantation of Hans von Bülow. When Verdi's *Requiem* was first produced he attacked it with all the acerbity of which he was a past-master. But before he died he had so far changed his mind as to indite a spontaneous palinode, confessing that on further acquaintance he had learned to admire what he had originally condemned. Verdi acknowledged the compliment with grave irony, hinting that perhaps after all von Bülow's first thoughts might be the better. But the incident is valuable because it illustrates in an extreme form the revulsion of feeling which scores, if not hundreds, of cultivated musicians underwent in the past twenty years.

Before *Aida* no enlightened amateur would have dared to express enthusiasm for Verdi. After *Otello* no broad-minded critic could venture to deny that he had style or genius. Since *Falstaff* he has been admitted to their affections by Wagnerians and Brahmsians, and positively runs a risk of becoming intellectually fashionable. When one thinks of *Traviata* and *Trovatore*, and the barrel-organs of one's youth, one is tempted to ask whether there is anything quite comparable to this development, this change from being the idol of the mob to the admired of the elect, in the whole history of art,—a change, moreover, that was effected without the aid of a literary propaganda, Verdi Societies, or any of the machinery which contributed so materially to the appreciation of Wagner's commanding genius. Yet wonderful as the growth and exaltation of Verdi's genius were, there is no valid reason to regard it as a *lusus naturae*. Given the power of dramatic characterisation revealed in the last act of *Rigoletto*, the self-criticism and the single-minded service of his art displayed through all his career, the flexibility which enabled him to grasp some of the vital principles of the Wagnerian system

without abandoning his own individuality, given also the stimulating effect of association, during the last thirty years of his life, with a literary collaborator who was not only a real poet but an original musician to boot, and the seeming miracle is reduced to the dimensions of a rare but intelligible expansion.

V

THE LAST OF THE OLD IMPRESARIOS

THE recent death,¹ after a long and chequered career, of Colonel Mapleson, known to the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation of opera-goers as one of the most enterprising, versatile, resourceful, and audacious figures in the musical life of the Victorian epoch, may be fairly taken to close a chapter in the history of the organisation of operatic entertainments. There are still impresarios on the Continent and amongst us. But their activities are mainly, if not entirely, confined to the sphere of concert-giving—a sphere nowadays so extensive as to afford scope for the energies of the most enterprising and ambitious of organisers. In the domain of opera the principle of co-operation has superseded that of

¹ In December 1901.

individual effort. We no longer hear in England of operatic impresarios, but of syndicates. The results achieved may be somewhat similar, but the method is different. There is, for the time being at any rate, no room for a generalissimo combining in his own person all the multifarious qualities demanded of the former organiser-in-chief of operatic representations. Colonel Mapleson was for England the last of his race, and his removal may warrant a brief survey of the aims and methods of which he was so picturesque a representative.

The genesis of the impresario may be traced back logically enough to the inherent necessities of the operatic environment. Opera came to its birth in Italy, the land of song, of the "bel canto," where the ingrained tendency of the people is (or was) to prefer charm to character, beauty of sound to dramatic intensity of expression. This led inevitably to the long and tyrannous predominance of the solo singer, male and female, which lasted for the best part of two centuries, and from which we are only at last beginning to extricate ourselves; and this tyranny necessitated a class of strong yet supple personages capable of controlling,

humouring, and reconciling the lions of the musical menagerie. For it should never be forgotten that the qualities required in the old impresario included personal courage as well as diplomacy. He had not only to console the prima donna for the death of her pet monkey, but to defend himself against the heels of an agile and infuriated tenor. Apart from what may be called the physical necessity for the impresario, there was an economic necessity as well. Co-operation amongst singers themselves was impossible, their maxim *inter se* being *homo homini lupus*; business details were to them distasteful or repulsive; hence the paramount need for a practical outsider with a head for figures, a faculty for organisation, and a love of adventure. For there were few more diversified careers than that of the impresario. Ultimate financial disaster seems on the whole to be the rule rather than the exception. Colonel Mapleson, who, according to his son's statement in the *Times*, paid out over two millions in salaries, died in poverty, leaving his widow destitute; and financial failure was the fate of Ebers, Lumley, and Jullien, to mention three well-known impre-

sarios in the earlier half of the last century. Of course there were exceptions, the most remarkable being the amazing Barbaja, a man of humble origin—he started in life as a waiter at a restaurant in Naples—and no culture, who attained an international celebrity in his profession, monopolised for a while the business of operatic management in Vienna, Naples, and Milan, and died a rich man. The question: Ought the impresario to be a musician? if tested by the case of Barbaja, would seem to call for an answer in the negative. For Barbaja was apparently ignorant even of the terminology of the art to which he owed his fortune. In evidence of this many stories are told, the best being that which an Italian singer who had at one time been a member of his company related to Mr. Sutherland Edwards. It seems that on one occasion a prima donna complained to him that the piano at which she was singing was “too high.” Whereupon Barbaja not only promised to have it lowered before the next rehearsal, but immediately after the singer’s departure ordered the stage carpenters to shorten the legs of the piano by an inch or two. But he evidently knew a good voice when he heard

it, which is more than can be said for many accomplished modern musicians, and the success of his management may be gauged from the bitterness with which he was assailed for having established "a regular traffic in virtuosi resembling in nearly every respect the now abolished slave trade." His method was to have agents in all the principal cities of the Continent, "creatures who faithfully play into his hands and second his designing policy. The plan is to engage singers, and then exchange them from place to place, and pass them from hand to hand, according as the exigencies or the caprices of the moment may seem to warrant." Barbaja was further charged, in company with Rossini, with having effected a "corner" in operatic singers, "engaging all artists of merit of every kind, so that by means of such a monopoly they may lay under contribution all the theatrical directions of Europe, and dictate their own terms."

The keynote of the character of the impresario is perhaps best revealed in a curious passage in Colonel Mapleson's *Memoirs*—one of the most diverting, if not exactly edifying, books of the kind ever written. Mapleson

had a genuine musical training at the Royal Academy of Music, then presided over by Cipriani Potter, played first violin in the opera orchestra under Balfe as far back as 1848, studied singing in Italy for three years at Milan, and appeared in tenor parts at Lodi and Verona. Losing his voice in 1854, he started a musical agency on his own account, and in 1858 was associated in the cares of operatic management with the late E. T. Smith, an eccentric genius, who ultimately retired into the hardware trade. The illuminative passage referred to closes Mapleson's record for 1861, the first year of his sole management: "At the close of the opera season, on balancing my accounts, I found myself a loser of some £1800. Thereupon I resolved to carry on the opera again in a larger locale next year in order that I might get straight; vowing, as the Monte Carlo gambler constantly does, that as soon as I got quite straight I would stop and never play again. I have been endeavouring during the last thirty years to get straight, and still hope to do so." This was written in 1888, but might have been written with equal truth at any period down

to the very end of his life. Continuance in the career of the single-handed impresario demands a sanguine, speculative nature, proof against countless rebuffs, and Mapleson had both qualities to a remarkable degree. His musical training was no doubt a valuable asset; he had within well-defined limits a sound appreciation of good and new music—witness his belief in *Faust* and *Carmen*, both produced in England under his management, and his frequent revivals of *Fidelio*—while his enterprise is attested by the fact that he was the first manager outside Germany to produce the entire series of the *Ring*. His inability to appreciate Wagner's music was logical enough, since the trade of the impresario as pursued by Mapleson was inextricably associated with the exploitation of "star" singers, a system to which Wagnerian opera gave a serious, if not a fatal blow. But in dealing with that strange tribe—"monsters," as Berlioz called them, and certainly the most kittle of all musical cattle—Mapleson had two great advantages, one of experience and the other of temperament. He had been a singer himself, and had learned to take their measure perfectly—"Most artists,"

he writes, "are children, and it is only by treating and humouring them as such that one can get them to work at all"—and he was so invincible a humorist that the ludicrous incidents of his career, instead of irritating, only refreshed and exhilarated him. When no bust of Mozart was forthcoming to grace a centenary performance of *Don Giovanni* at Cork, Mapleson was prepared to substitute one of Parnell, "which by the removal of the beard and some other manipulation" could be made to resemble the immortal composer. When a rival impresario made himself dangerous, he retaliated by describing him to an interviewer as a *guastamestiere*, "a word which sorely puzzled him and caused him to consult his solicitor." When Mongini, the tenor, had a grievance against the master tailor on account of a misfit, Mapleson calmed the infuriated artist by promising that the offender should be cruelly punished and put, with his wife and family, upon the streets to starve next morning :—

"The next day at twelve o'clock, as per appointment, Mongini came to my office to be present at the punishment of the master tailor. I had taken

the precaution to inform the tailor, who was a single man, that he had a wife and four children, and that he was to be sure and recollect this. I called him into my room in the presence of Mongini and told him gravely that he with his wife and children must now starve. There was no alternative after the treatment Mongini had received the previous evening. Mongini at once supplicated me not to let the children die in the gutter, as it might injure him with the public, and he ended by promising that if I would retain the tailor in my service he would sing an extra night for nothing."

The story, which is only one out of scores equally entertaining to be found in the *Memoirs*, may not be accepted as gospel, but any one who knew Mapleson will admit that this was just the spirit—that of diplomatist and *farceur* in one—in which he would have faced such a situation. The type of character portrayed, with a few honourable exceptions, in his reminiscences—a type which attains its culminating point in the tenors and prima donnas—strikes the ordinary student of humanity much as a European traveller is struck when he first sets eyes on, let us say, a hairy Ainu or a Central African pygmy. They excite wonder rather than admiration, and if the impresario who arranges for the display of their

talents occasionally reaps a golden harvest out of his contracts, he is on the whole not extravagantly compensated for the "moral and intellectual damage" caused by consorting with these "monsters." On the whole, we should be inclined to believe that the statistics of solvency showed a higher percentage of failures amongst impresarios than amongst "stars." Mapleson's castles were all in Spain: Madame Patti, his trump card in so many seasons and tours, managed to build a very substantial castle no farther off than Wales.

In the twenty years or so that have elapsed since Colonel Mapleson was in the active pursuit of his calling, the conditions of operatic management have materially changed, owing to a variety of causes, notably the development of rival attractions, the education of popular taste, the multiplication of orchestral concerts, the triumph of Wagner (whom Mapleson solemnly pronounced an operatic failure, and a writer in the *Nineteenth Century* denounced as a burst bubble), and the decline of the ballet. Travelling companies are no longer organised on a scale demanding the exercise of those Napoleonic qualities of strategy, subtlety,

and audacity displayed by Mapleson in his American journeys—which remind us of nothing so much as of a royal progress of naughty children. The opera of to-day, if not altogether a rational pastime, is freed from a good many of its old excrescences and conventions. It no longer stands for that monstrous outgrowth of a divine art which moved Carlyle, after his solitary but memorable visit to Her Majesty's Theatre, to denounce music as an "open Bedlamite," and opera as an "explosion of all the upholsteries," organised at fabulous expense to illuminate an hour's flirtation of "this and the other Marquis Singedelomme, Prince Mahogany, or the like foreign dignitary," with sundry "rouged, bejewelled, and high-dizened improper females of quality." The acquiescence of the fashionable world in the darkening of the auditorium is in itself a notable sign of the altered temper and attitude of the opera-going public.

VI

THE DECLINE OF THE PRIMA DONNA

AT a recent Conference of the Incorporated Society of Musicians the learned Professor Prout bewailed the scarcity of great soloists, and in particular the rarity of the English prima donna. Professor Prout's lament is not altogether without cause ; some of our veterans indeed lag painfully on the scene, but they can hardly be called superfluous, since there are not enough to take their places. But the deficiency, according to Professor Prout, is far from irremediable. Genius in song, if we are to believe him, is entirely a matter of taking pains, and, above all, of taking time. "Fifty or sixty years ago singers were trained for ten or twelve years. Now a woman after twelve months'

training thinks herself qualified to come out and appear in the principal choirs as prima donna. She comes out half-educated, and half-educated men or women never have and never will become great artists." Strange that so well-informed a critic as Professor Prout—assuming that he was correctly reported—should have committed himself to the view that training, rather than natural aptitude or temperament, is the prime essential in the singer. Strange, too, that by the use of the phrase "prima donna in the principal choirs" he should have discarded the true connotation of the word, which has nothing to say to the concert-room and everything to the stage. It is no use disguising the fact that English prima donnas have always been scarce, and that the very few singers bearing English names, or claiming English nationality, who have achieved a Continental reputation, on the boards or off it, in the last two hundred years, have been of foreign or Irish extraction. Mrs. Billington was a German, Catherine Hayes an Irishwoman, Clara Novello an Italian. If dogged perseverance and patience—qualities in which the English have never been wanting—could by themselves have ensured the achieve-

ment of supreme distinction in the world of song, then England, after Germany, ought to have produced a greater number of prime donne than any other country in the world. The industry and assiduity of English pupils, as Professor Prout must know, is often pathetic in its futile strenuousness. As a matter of fact, we stand far below the mercurial Americans, so far as female operatic singers are concerned ; while as to the lack of great voices, it may console Professor Prout to know that a precisely similar complaint was made in the year 1813 by Lord Mount-Edgcumbe—an admirable critic—who fixed the departure of Catalani as the opening of a new era marked by decadence in the art of singing, and a scarcity of good singers. Perhaps, then, we too are on the eve of a great vocal revival.

It is impossible to gainsay Professor Prout's contention that the English prima donna is a *rara avis*, but so she always was. He would, however, have been almost equally justified in contending that prima donnas irrespective of race were growing scarcer, and, what is more, we are sure that he could have made out an excellent case for witnessing the gradual extinction of the

species with something like equanimity. Such an attitude is at least justified in great measure by a survey of the alternations of her history : her early predominance in the days of Handel ; her competition with the male soprano in the days of Farinelli and Pacchierotti ; the reassertion of her supremacy with the long line of famous singers beginning with Banti, Catalani, Pasti, and Malibran ; and her comparative eclipse in recent years owing to the prominence assigned to the *Heldentenor*, the cult of the orchestra, and, we may add, the revolt of modern operatic composers. The part played by the prima donna—we use the term in its old meaning, as indicating the chief female singer of an operatic company—has been brilliant, but it can hardly be urged that she has exerted a fruitful, or even beneficial influence on the evolution of music. The case against them is forcibly, if somewhat ferociously, stated by Berlioz in a notable passage in his *Memoirs*, “We shall always find,” he writes, “a fair number of female singers, popular from their brilliant singing of brilliant trifles, and odious to the great masters because utterly incapable of properly interpreting them. They have voices, a certain knowledge of music,

and flexible throats : they are lacking in soul, brain, and heart. Such women are regular monsters, and all the more formidable to composers that they are often charming monsters. This explains the weakness of certain masters in writing falsely sentimental parts, which attract the public by their brilliancy. It also explains the number of degenerate works, the gradual degradation of style, the destruction of all sense of expression, the neglect of dramatic properties, the contempt for the true, the grand, and the beautiful, and the cynicism and decrepitude of art in certain countries." There is exaggeration in the latter sentences, but every single statement can be illustrated from the biographies of the "queens of song." To Catalani, one of the greatest singers of the century, we owe the "star" system—"ma femme et cinq ou six poupées"—with its corollary of exorbitant fees—she received £2000 for singing at a festival—and faulty ensemble. What Berlioz says of the prima donna's musical knowledge is certainly not exaggerated. The humblest player in the orchestra is a better musician than nineteen out of twenty "star" singers ; while, as for their vanity, superstition, jealousy, and extravagance,

it is enough to refer to the evidence furnished in his entertaining *Memoirs* by Colonel Mapleson, whose knowledge of their ways and habits has been more extensive and peculiar than that of any other modern impresario. In regard to lack of general culture the prima donna is only one degree removed from the tenor—Colonel Mapleson describes one of the latter who insisted on being always designated as “assoluto,” but was unable to spell the word, while another took no interest in anything outside his stage work except kites and fireworks—her dearest friend is a parrot or monkey, and it has been averred that the summit of her ambition is to possess a gold bath. It is the rarest thing to find that any famous prima donna has ever “created” a new rôle of any artistic importance, or associated herself with the interpretation of the music of any young composer, no matter how gifted. Her choice of songs in the concert-room alternates between hackneyed favourites and absolutely worthless novelties. Alone among the great executants, the prima donna has been conspicuous for her abstinence from any efforts to achieve distinction as a composer. Of course there are exceptions to this as to most rules, and

the names of Schröder-Devrient, Jenny Lind, and Pauline Viardot—who moved in the mid-stream of Parisian culture, and was the friend, to mention no others, of Heine and Tourguenieff—will occur to our readers. But Jenny Lind was void of the manners and mannerisms of the prima donna, and soon retired from a career in which she felt ill at ease; Schröder-Devrient was a woman of genius, devoted to the highest artistic aims, who sacrificed beauty of tone to dramatic intensity of expression, and had her reward in the admiration of Beethoven, Wagner, and Mendelssohn; and Pauline Viardot-Garcia is the sister of the meteoric Malibran and of Manuel Garcia the younger (that wonderful nonagenarian who invented the laryngoscope, and was the teacher of Jenny Lind), and the original of George Sand's *Consuelo*; in other words, she comes of an exceptional stock—her father was a man of extraordinary talent, versatility, and energy—and is by far the most remarkable female musician now living. These famous singers were artists first, and only prima donnas in the strictly musical or technical sense of the word. Only a Lombroso or a Nordau could render justice to the psychology of the

prima donna. Colonel Mapleson's *Memoirs* are full of splendid materials for such a study, but he approaches the subject in the spirit of a humorist, often in that of a *farceur*. In the whole range of operatic literature there is no more diverting reading than the Colonel's account of the interview between Madame Nilsson and the Shah, or of his memorable tour in the Western States some sixteen years ago, when Mmes. Patti and Gerster were both on board the same train. We cannot resist the temptation to quote the description of the company's reception at Cheyenne—"a little town consisting of about two streets, but possessing a most refined society, composed, it is true, of cowboys." On Madame Patti's arrival "a brass band, placed in a circle, with the bandmaster in the centre, commenced performing music which was rather mixed. Madame Patti requested me to ask the bandmaster what they were playing; but on my attempting to enter the circle the bandmaster rushed at me, telling me with expressive gestures that if I touched one of his musicians the whole circle would fall down. They had been on duty during the last thirty-six hours, waiting our arrival, and as they

had taken 'considerable refreshment' he had had great difficulty in placing them on their feet. We dispensed with all ceremony, and the night serenade was struck out of the programme, the men being sent home." After reading this passage, we are not surprised to hear that a chair of English Literature, bearing the name of the Napoleonic impresario, was founded at a university in the Southern States.

After all, when criticism has done its worst, certain good qualities must be allowed even to the prima donna of the old school—*i.e.* who regarded the *aria di agilità* as an end in itself rather than a means to an end. Whatever were her eccentricities, she at least recognised the necessity of a long and careful training, and submitted patiently to a great deal of preliminary preparation. And the value of that careful, old-fashioned training, pyrotechnics and all, is sufficiently indicated by the fact that Wagner's music, as the most enlightened Wagnerians will readily admit, is never more impressive than when rendered by singers educated not *alla Tedesca*, but according to the methods and traditions of the *bel canto*, as Wagner himself fully realised, for he en-

deavoured to persuade Manuel Garcia to come over and train his singers for Bayreuth in 1876. But while he thus admitted that good might come out of the system which produced the prima donna, Wagner did more than any other musician to emancipate the art from her tyrannical influence. Handel's short way of dealing with a recalcitrant prima donna was to threaten to throw her out of the window if she would not sing what he had written for her. Wagner struck at the root of the evil by refusing to write for her at all. After *Tannhäuser* there is nothing approximating to conventional ornament in any of his operas, and what is, perhaps, the most difficult piece of vocal embellishment in the whole of the *Ring* occurs, not in the part of a female singer, but in that of Siegfried in the *Götterdämmerung*. The prima donna, in short, stood to Wagner for all that was conventional, insincere, and meretricious in the old opera. She represented the divorce of sound from sense, the destruction of all balance in characterisation, the perpetual intrusion of impertinent embroidery, and the constant parade of a vain and vulgar egotism. He simply refused to recognise her existence, much less admit her

into the scheme of his music-drama. So far as individual effort is concerned, the dethronement of the prima donna must be ascribed to Wagner before all others, though it is significant that Verdi, who in his youth did so much to advance her prestige, in his latest and, as many critics think, his greatest opera—*Falstaff*—has given the leading rôle to a baritone, and dispensed with a prima donna altogether. It is only fair to add that the decline of the prima donna may well be accounted for on general principles of sociological evolution entirely apart from the revolt of composers. That is to say, it might be contended that so long as woman was condemned to play at best a merely decorative part in life, so long did the ornamental, frivolous, and butterfly prima donna flourish. But with the emergence of a newer conception of the relations of the sexes, with the escape of Nora from her Dolls' House, the growth of the Feminist movement, the advent of Amalie Skram, George Egerton, and Sarah Grand, the butterfly type—of which the prima donna was the supreme manifestation—naturally and inevitably lapsed into obscurity. For ourselves we feel inclined to apply the well-known

American prescription for getting rid of both the Irish and the Americans. We should like to see every Nora kill a prima donna and be hanged for it.

VII

THE CHARM OF THE QUARTET

THE advent of the Joachim quartet,¹ and the opportunity now happily afforded of hearing that matchless combination—literally τετράγωνος ἄνευ ψόγου—under exceptionally favourable conditions, may be regarded as a sufficient excuse for an attempt to analyse the peculiar charm that resides in the form of musical composition to which the programmes are about to be devoted. It would be vain to pretend even in these enlightened days, when amateurs have so largely deserted the piano for stringed instruments, that the cult of the quartet is widely popular. Indeed, it is by no means uncommon to encounter people whose love of music is sincere, and whose talent for execution undoubted, frankly admit-

¹ April 1901.

ting their inability to appreciate quartet playing except in homœopathic doses, or when tempered with a considerable admixture of vocal and instrumental solos. They find it dry, they declare that it imposes a severe strain upon their attention, and, above all, they miss the volume, the sonority, the rich colouring, and the dramatic contrasts to which they have been familiarised by a long course of attendance at orchestral concerts or operatic representations. What an American critic has called "Jumbo-mania," or the worship of mammoth proportions, is no new phase in the evolution of the art. Hauptmann gives an amusing account in one of his letters some fifty years ago of the score of Raimondi's *Potiphar*, which was five feet high and five feet broad. In another passage he says: "I am longing for some sacred music without these confounded trumpets and kettledrums. Why is the Almighty to be thundered at perpetually?" The composers began it, no doubt, but the public, or a considerable portion of the public, have got so accustomed to the multiplication of instruments and the development of mere volume of sound as to mistake quantity for quality. The fact

that Wagner, who was a great genius, laid out his work on a huge scale established a dangerous precedent. Others were able to imitate his bigness, but not his grandeur, and of late years we have fallen to no small extent under the "dominion of din." An orchestra is now hardly regarded as deserving the name unless it contains a hundred performers, and the battery of instruments of percussion has come to be one of its hardest-worked sections. All this is inevitable, but by no means points to enhanced musical culture, but rather the reverse. The primitive instincts of the natural man are gratified by "Janissary music"—Brahms in one of his letters speaks of male choruses and the modern brass instruments as being peculiarly well suited to the average sensual man—while strange experiments in abnormal sonority are required to tickle the ears of the jaded decadent. Quartet music, the most refined and abstract outcome of the art, the most detached from all sensuous accessories, appeals neither to the one nor the other.

In almost every other branch of musical composition we are victims of the tyranny

of the "programme," whether chosen by the composer or imposed by the ingenious commentator. Here, and here almost alone, we are emancipated from the obligation of fitting or trying to fit a definite image or emotion to each musical phrase, and enjoy the privilege of listening to music which, if we may be allowed the paradox, is all the more significant because it cannot be reduced to verbal expression. The best chamber music, like the finest symphonic music, is a sort of transcendental language which affects the hearer somewhat in the same way as the study of astronomy or the higher mathematics their ardent devotees. It suggests the ineffable and the infinite perhaps more vividly than any other form of art. It also evokes many other images and thoughts of a definite nature, but in no two cases are these mental pictures identical. A passage suggesting a sunset to one hearer may call up a battle scene to another. But no reasonable person wishes to force his picture on his neighbour, especially as the same passage may visualise itself differently to the same hearer on different occasions. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of a good deal of programme music,

—that which gratuitously attempts to tie down music to the suggestion of specific images and emotions, a function which the language of everyday life already performs quite well enough.

That quartet music should exert a peculiar fascination on those who genuinely appreciate it is due not merely to its abstract and transcendental character. It is due also to the fact that composers in writing for the string quartet have invariably done so to please themselves, to “indulge their genius,” and without any thought of profit or popularity. The situation is very happily summed up in Edward Holmes’s *Life of Mozart*, where he records a classical instance of this disinterested devotion to high ideals. “In January, 1785,” he writes, “he [Mozart] put the finishing hand to a work which had long deeply interested him, and on which he had, for some years, employed much time, snatched from laborious duties—namely, the six violin quartets, dedicated in the autumn of 1785 to Joseph Haydn. The desire of transmitting to posterity a memorial of their friendship stimulated his industry far more than the probabilities of gain, which indeed, in the case of a work of

such high art, were extremely remote. In one so situated as the composer the production of these quartets was an act of pure sentiment and romantic enthusiasm. It is not the less gratifying, however, to know that the work found a market, and that Artaria purchased the copyright for a hundred ducats." These were the quartets which were returned to the publisher from Italy with the excuse that "the engraving was full of mistakes" — Mozart's deliberate disregard for the canons of orthodox composition having roused the indignation of the purists—and the parts of which were torn up by a Hungarian nobleman, whose ear was outraged by their audacious dissonances. What was true of Mozart in 1785 still remains true of the composers of to-day. When they want to please themselves rather than the public, and are at the same time in the most disinterested mood as regards financial remuneration, they compose for the string quartet. It would be really most interesting to ascertain the highest price ever paid for this form of composition and to compare it with the proceeds of some royalty ballads.

And as the string quartet and its cognate

forms furnish the most perfect vehicle for abstract or absolute music, as it affords the composer the best scope for expressing the transcendental side of his genius in terms of sound regardless of profit or popularity, so also does it serve as a touchstone of the artistic devotion and singlemindedness of its interpreters. For the essence of good quartet playing is incompatible with the unrestrained assertion of individuality or the parade of technical skill. The character of all the best music written for this combination is entirely alien to such a theory. The first violin should be *primus inter pares*, not a tyrant or a *prima donna assoluta*; where the leader assumes this rôle it shows either that he misconceives the situation, or that the composer has written, not a quartet, but a solo with string accompaniment, and the former explanation is much more likely to be the correct one. But the success of the really famous quartets of the last half-century, from the Florentine Quartet led by Jean Becker down to the Bohemians and the Kneisel Quartet of Boston, has been due to the loyal acceptance of this principle. Where the leader happens to be a great virtuoso

and soloist, as in the case of Joachim, this capacity for self-effacement is all the more admirable. But if there is no room for vulgar self-assertion in the ideal quartet, there is no room either for any but first-rate musicians and executants. Every one gets his chance, and from time to time is under the microscope. There is an amusing story relating how Louis XII. of France commissioned Josquin des Prés to compose a canon in which he might take part, or rather, to adapt one of his favourite songs to that form. The ingenious Josquin was quite equal to the occasion. He found that the song could be made into a two-part canon, and he arranged it for two boys' voices, adding a bass part for himself, and a fourth part for the King, in which the truth of the saying that the King can do no wrong was practically ensured in advance, for the *vox Regis* consisted of only one note! The King, we read, was so enchanted to find that he could sing in four-part music, that he handsomely rewarded the composer for his pains. There is no room for Kings or Kaisers in string quartets.

VIII

SOUNDLESS MUSIC

THERE is surely no art or accomplishment which gives less encouragement to the upholders of the equality of mankind than music ; no art, again, in which gifts seem to be more capriciously bestowed. Some fortunate individuals are born, so to say, with a golden tune in their throats, or with an aptitude for acquiring technical dexterity or for reading at sight or for reproducing by ear what they have heard which excites furious envy in others less richly endowed, but by no means less *fanatici per la musica*. For how often it occurs that a genuine, and even passionate lover of music is “no performer,” while facile, or even brilliant powers of execution are no guarantee for taste, ambition, reverence, or high ideals. Such persons may not unfairly be described as Bachelors of Music,—

on the ground that they are never wedded to their art. The "mute inglorious" amateur, on the other hand, musical without being a musician, has at least the compensation of being convinced that his capacity in this regard for pleasure and pain is infinitely greater than that of the natural executants mentioned above; also that he is indispensable in creating and diffusing that atmosphere of intelligent and sympathetic appreciation without which a true artist seldom is able to put forth his full powers.

But disparity in individual musical attainment and endowment is not confined to execution and appreciation. There is another department, to which for convenience' sake we may give the name of soundless music, in which the inequality is no less marked, though it is less often brought openly into evidence. Speaking roughly and unscientifically, the faculty involved is that of hearing music in one's head. Most people have some sort of "ear" for melody,—a faculty quite apart from acuteness of hearing. One of the most entirely unmusical men the present writer ever knew was an officer who, though he could not sing the simplest tune, could when he was lying ill in a great bar-

racks distinguish men of the different branches of the Service by their footfall. We may, therefore, put at the bottom of the scale those persons in whom the musical ear is practically non-existent, and who are quite incapable of hearing a tune in their brain, or, to put it in another way, of being haunted by an air without humming, whistling, or singing it aloud. Next above them we would place those of whom it may be said, in the words which Sir Walter Scott was so fond of applying to himself, that while they have a reasonably good ear for a jig, solos and sonatas give them the spleen. Such persons, we take it, do possess this supplementary sense of hearing, and are capable of realising tunes without rendering them audible. With the ordinary uncultivated amateur the exercise of this faculty depends a great deal on the nearness in point of time to any performance at which the melody in question has been heard, or the number of times it has been dinned into one's head. Persons who frequent musical festivals will know what it is to come away at the end of the week with one's head positively buzzing with themes of symphonies, overtures, Wagnerian excerpts, and the like. Proceeding

upwards in our scale of musical intelligences, the next noteworthy capacity to be found in those who possess the mental ear is that of being able to hear not only melodies but harmonies, not only voices but instruments. Beethoven, it may be remarked parenthetically, is said never to have heard one of his melodies in the tones of the human voice, but always in those of some particular instrument. We have now reached a point, however, where a broad line of demarcation separates the ordinary musical individual from the cultivated musician and the composer. The ability to hear mentally, or recall, without translating them into sound, harmonies as opposed to melodies, varies enormously in extent and intensity. In the case of the average musically constituted individual the melody is easily the predominant partner; the bass is mentally audible, but the inner parts are blurred, so to speak, unless the impression is very recent and fresh. In the case of the trained or highly organised musician it is another matter altogether. The brain picture is precise in all its parts, and it is heard in a definite key, which can be instantaneously translated into sound or recorded on paper without any such intermediate

process as that of verification or modification on the keyboard of the piano. This faculty constitutes an important and indispensable part in the necessary equipment of the composer, since those who rely exclusively on the piano are unworthy of the name. But it is no guarantee that the composition will have merit, for otherwise Richter and von Bülow would be amongst the great creators, and not the great interpreters. There are a variety of other desiderata,—mastery of form, familiarity with the range and limitations of voices and instruments, to say nothing of the creative impulse. Almost any one can compose—after a fashion—and every one nowadays can orchestrate, but to give us *aliquid novi*,—that is reserved for a very few. Still, as we have said, this mental hearing—a faculty which can be cultivated, but, like the sense of absolute pitch, is largely inborn—is indispensable to the composer, and it is intimately associated with what to the layman must always seem one of the most miraculous exhibitions of human genius,—the conception, completion, and recording in a permanent form of the most elaborate and complicated musical works before a single note has been audibly

sounded. This is no doubt to put the case in an extreme form, for we know that Beethoven used, when in the heat of his inspiration, to roar and emit all manner of strange sounds. But the statement is in its essentials perfectly true, and for corroboration one has only to point to the classical case of the *Meistersinger* and the testimony of Dr. Richter. For, as is well known, Dr. Richter when a young man was employed by Wagner, then living at his villa near Lucerne, to make the first copy of the full score of that immortal work. Dr. Richter has left it on record that during all the months he lived under the same roof with Wagner, he never once heard him touch the piano. He himself used occasionally to take a boat on the lake, row off to a secluded spot, and play on his horn—Dr. Richter began his career as a horn player in the Kärntnerthor Theatre—passages from the new opera. There he was once discovered by an Englishman—a Cambridge don, we believe—who was much mystified by these “horns of elf-land faintly blowing.” Meeting him years afterwards, Dr. Richter told him that he could safely say he was the first person in the world (after himself) who had heard what the music

of the *Meistersinger* sounded like. In this context one cannot omit to mention what on the face of them always seem two of the greatest tragedies in the annals of music,—the deafness of Beethoven, and the fact that Schubert did not live to witness the performance of most of his greatest works, symphonic and otherwise. It may be, perhaps, that in a sense in which Keats hardly intended it, “melodies unheard” are “sweeter far”; that no performance, however admirable, reaches the celestial beauty of the sounds heard only in the brain of the creator; but few composers will maintain that the audible realisation of their works does not add new and unexpected lustre to the melodies and harmonies that took shape in their brain. *Per contra*, Boïto is credited with the assertion that he preferred to read the masterpieces of Bach in score rather than hear them performed, on the ground that they are even finer and more impressive on paper than when translated into sound.

Assuming the continuous progress of musical culture one may contend that in the musical millennium, the claims of which have been grossly neglected by our scientific Zadkiels, every one will be able to read a full score with the same ease with

which every one now reads a new novel, with the natural corollary that all performances will be unnecessary, and all music become soundless. Logically, no doubt, the inference is legitimate enough, and in the interests of a highly strung humanity much might be urged in favour of a state of affairs which would so materially abate the dominion of din. But the analogy afforded by the attitude of the gifted few who already possess this faculty is certainly very far from supporting the forecast of a world denuded of singers and players, instruments and concert halls. For it is precisely those who can dispense with materialised music who are most energetic in promoting its performance. In a world of soundless music the composer would be deprived of the knowledge of the effect produced by his work upon others ; he would never be able to win an encore or even applause, and would be practically dependent on written criticism as an index of his success. Unless human nature changes very radically, these considerations are sufficient to postpone indefinitely the advent of the silent musical millennium.

IX

MENIAL MUSIC

“DURING the wait the excellent band of the Crystal Palace Company played a selection much appreciated by the public.” The above extract from the telegraphic account of a great football match recently played at the Crystal Palace posted upon a club notice-board caught the eye of the present writer and set him wondering what “G.,” with his contempt for the tyranny of athletic pastimes, would have said of this strange mixture of *μουσική* and *γυμναστική*, — the forty thousand excursionists from the north, and some forty thousand more from the south, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the gladiators hired from all sides to do battle for Sheffield and Southampton, yet not too impatient to listen to and appreciate the efforts of the excellent band of the company. After all,

Music, as we understand the word, is by far the youngest of the arts, and in virtue of her youth must expect to be treated as a Cinderella, and condemned to a certain amount of ignoble drudgery. We are not aware of the precise character of the programme selected to appease the impatience of the expectant onlookers on the occasion referred to, but can imagine that it did not contain anything of a severely classical nature, or that anybody's feelings were greatly affronted. In spite of the growth of the taste for symphonic music and the multiplication of instrumental concerts, it is not always easy even for a first-rate orchestral player to dispense with engagements of which little more can be said than that they bring in bread-and-butter,—engagements, that is, in theatre bands, or in bands that play at dances. A few years ago the writer recognised in the orchestra of a theatre, where an alleged “musical comedy” of more than usually deplorable inanity was being performed, the features of a famous wood-wind player whom Richter has pronounced “a great artist.” A more tragic figure it would be difficult to conceive. — Imagine, by way of illustrative parallel, a Bishop on the running-

path, or Mr. John Morley condemned to write personal paragraphs for a syndicate of society papers !

If, however, one were to make out a list in order of demerit of all the ignoble functions which music is forced to fulfil, there would be several stages below that of furnishing the *hors d'œuvre* to football matches or musical comedy. With regard to theatrical music outside opera, we are not at all sure that it is not possible to lay down a canon that the respect paid to music varies inversely with the quality of the text. At any rate, we can imagine few more trying experiences for a serious musician than those involved in carrying out a commission to compose incidental music to a "standard" or "high-class" drama. We sometimes hear it said that conversation is a lost art. Persons who hold that pessimistic view need only attend the "first night" of a Shakespearian revival and observe the audience during the performance of the music between the acts. As the lady remarked in extenuation of the habit of swearing prevalent in her youth : "It was a great set-off to conversation"; much the same might be said of incidental music. In the theatre, music has still for the most part an

unrecognised claim to an independent existence. As an accompaniment to be sung or danced to its utility is generally recognised, and in pantomimes it is indispensable as a means of accentuating strong situations by vehement *tremolando* in the strings. A piccolo, or better, a cornet, solo in the *entr'acte* will generally extort a tribute of applause. But otherwise the function of the theatre band is distinctly ancillary, not to say menial.

Trying as it must be at times to the self-respecting artist to take part in a theatre band, there is another extremely common function of music of a decidedly less dignified position. We mean the part played by the divine art at fashionable restaurants and public dinners. People who care very much about music do not as a rule enjoy eating to the accompaniment of a band. If the music is really good, they feel it to be something of an insult to the musicians and the composers. Even if it is only light music well played, it tends to distract the diner's attention from his neighbour, and impairs the flow of conversation. Some people, again, complain that in these circumstances they always want to wield knife, fork, and spoon in

time to the music, just as we have heard competitors at athletic sports complain that a band "put them off" by making them try to run in step with the music.—Imagine the feelings of an accomplished hurdler trying to adapt the "three strides" to a piece of music in common time!—When, therefore, optimists expatiate on the growth of musical culture in England, it is open to objectors to adduce the increased demand for instrumental music at meal-times. Nowadays, when everybody who wishes to be anybody never dines at home, restaurant and hotel bands have increased and multiplied so largely that we may look forward to the gradual development of the practice of harmonising the programme to the *menu*. Handel would obviously clash with any course save the joints, just as Spohr, Chopin, and Gounod would synchronise with the later and non-carnivorous stages of a banquet. But after all, some one may say, why lay stress on the performance of music at meal-times in public places as an indication of defective musical taste amongst the English? Is it not a custom that obtains widely in Germany? That is true enough, but we would point out that at the

best German musical restaurants the music goes on long after every one has finished dining, and that it is the music rather than the dinner which constitutes the chief attraction. Still, view it as one may, the gastronomic or digestive function of music is one which cannot be regarded as particularly dignified. Another quasi-menial duty most efficiently performed by music may be observed at political meetings, where the impatience of the audience is allayed either by the singing of topical songs or the playing of popular airs on the organ,—a degradation of that noble instrument which reminds one of Samson being forced to make sport for the Philistines. As a rule, however, the menial functions in music are entrusted for the most part to instruments which have least to complain of such treatment. The cornet, though in its place a very useful auxiliary, justifies its existence solely as an orchestral instrument, and in virtue of the superior certainty with which passages can be played upon it in comparison with the true trumpet. Otherwise it is the most ignoble and undistinguished voice in the orchestra, and when a musician hears it bleating forth some familiar air from Balfe at a public-

house door, his sense of the fitness of things is far less outraged than by the spectacle of a violin, or even a harp, condemned to keep such low company. As for the banjo, one is always comforted by the pleasing spectacle of a perfect accordance between the character and appearance of the instrument on the one side, and the purposes to which it is devoted on the other. The penny whistle, as the instrument of the democracy, claims attention, if not sympathy, and the virtuosity displayed by some street performers is truly miraculous. It has also had the good fortune to be immortalised by R. L. Stevenson in *The Wrong Box*. (Who can ever forget that inimitable chapter which opens with a discussion of the strange fact that one seldom meets a tiro on this instrument—"the young of the penny whistler, like those of the salmon, are occult from observation"—and proceeds to narrate the encounter between Sergeant Harker and the boy?) But on the whole its strains, if "soul-animating," can hardly be described as "alas! too few."

The disabilities of music and musicians are still numerous enough to wound the susceptibilities of a devout lover of the art, though

distinguished artists are no longer subjected to the social indignities which aroused the wrath of Spohr when he visited England some seventy years ago. On the other hand, music, as compared with the other arts, enjoys certain countervailing advantages or immunities by no means to be lightly overlooked. Thus in an age in which literature and pictorial art are habitually condemned to be the helots of commercial enterprise, music knows little of the base uses of advertisement. It has never even occurred to a pill manufacturer to hire a composer to write an opera in praise of his wares, or to the proprietor of a hair-wash to induce a long-haired pianist to testify to its efficacy. The attitude of the piano manufacturer is undoubtedly open to a certain amount of criticism, and one cannot but wonder at the resourcefulness which some of the "monarchs of the keyboard" have displayed in writing testimonials ascribing supreme excellence to the instruments not of one but of several different makers. The attitude of the manufacturers is illustrated by the anecdote of one of the tribe who, on being asked after some recital, "What did Rubinstein play?" replied indignantly, "Why, a Blüth-

stein, of course ! ” As for the proper attitude of the pianist, we have the liveliest sympathy with von Bülow, of whom it is related that, in the course of a tour in America, he greatly resented the action of the firm on whose pianofortes he played in affixing an unusually monstrous name-board on the front of the instrument. At last he determined to be revenged on the culprits, and the mode of his vengeance was thoroughly characteristic. Coming on to the platform at the beginning of one of his recitals, he removed the offending board, threw it on the floor, danced a war-dance upon it, and then, with an air of great relief, sat down at the pianoforte.

X

HANS RICHTER

Vixere fortes ante—Hans Richter : that none would admit more readily than himself. The debt that England owes in particular to Charles Hallé and August Manns it would be unjust to overlook and almost impossible to overestimate. But Richter was, if not the very first, at least the most conspicuous of the foreign invaders who in the last quarter of the nineteenth century revealed in their entirety to London audiences the illuminative resources of the modern orchestra as applied to the interpretation of the classical, romantic, neo-romantic, and transcendental schools alike. The Richter concerts date back to the year 1879 ; the vagaries of fashion in music are almost as marked as in dress, and the lustre of his achievements in the eyes of the rising genera-

tion of concert-goers may be slightly dimmed by the more aggressive, precious, athletic, or flamboyant methods of his younger rivals. The prima donna has long ceased to enjoy a monopoly of extravagant adulation. The cult of the conductor has attained dimensions which may best be exemplified by the following illuminating anecdote. A few years ago a then highly fashionable conductor found it necessary, owing to his prodigious exertions, to change his shirt in the interval between the two parts of the concert, and the son of the house where he was an honoured guest was immensely proud of the privilege of being allowed to carry to the concert hall the precious box in which the hero's change of linen was enshrined. Such precautions and privileges, it may safely be averred, were never taken or granted by Dr. Richter. He is one of the Olympians—like the late Madame Schumann and Dr. Joachim—he sees no virtue in unnecessary exertion, and has never confounded conducting with calisthenics or serpentine dancing. This freedom from pose and platform mannerism, however, welcome and delightful as it is, must be reckoned as one of the least

of Richter's great positive qualities as a conductor. Of these, one must begin with his prodigious memory—possibly excelled by that of the late Hans von Bülow alone—which enables him not merely to conduct the great masterpieces of Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms, and other composers by heart, but in some cases to dispense with a book even at rehearsal. Hans von Bülow once wittily divided conductors into two classes,—those who kept their heads in the score, and those who kept the score in their heads. Richter is the greatest living representative of the second class. Memory, no doubt, in certain manifestations seems to be a mere freak, and may be unaccompanied by a high degree of intelligence in other respects, but it can be safely stated that this particular sort of memory has never been found save in persons of very considerable mental powers. Richter's greatness as a conductor is based on a variety of attainments which none of his competitors unite in the same degree,—memory, practical knowledge of the technique and capacity of the instruments, and a broad-minded and sane conception of the intentions of the composer

he is interpreting. He steers equally clear of commonplace or eccentricity. The emotion aroused, therefore, is the faithful index of this loyalty to the composer ; for if expressed in words it would probably be not "How wonderful or original Richter's reading is," but "How splendid the Beethoven, or Brahms, or Tschai-kowsky sounded." He has his limitations ; in orgiastic or hysterical music he does not seem at his ease ; but then he is an Olympian, and we would not have him otherwise. *Non omnia possumus omnes*. It is said that *Carmen* under his *bâton* loses its Mediterranean quality, which is a pity ; and that he is out of sympathy with certain modern composers who are masters of "psychology, trigonometry, chemistry," and have every gift but that of melody ; but here there are many who will gladly associate themselves with his heresy. His limitations, in fine, are those of a genial, dignified, well-balanced temperament, perhaps too serious to appreciate the lighter jocundities of his art or to squander his energies on feats of transcendental virtuosity, certainly too sane to be enamoured of *bizarrierie*, trickery, or chaotic extravagance. His knowledge of the instruments is not intuitive like

that of Berlioz—who only played the flute and guitar—but based on actual familiarity. He began life as a horn player, and has a working knowledge of every instrument in the band. Hence if he wants a particular effect and the player declares he cannot produce it, Dr. Richter is always able to show him how it is to be done. No wonder then that he has his men in the hollow of his hand, for they know it is not the least use demurring to his demands. Again, it is precisely because of his thorough knowledge of the technique of all instruments that Dr. Richter is able to recognise when an individual player has done a good piece of work, and, it may be added, there never was a conductor who was readier or more happy in his acknowledgment of merit in others. He is the soul of honesty and generosity. Who that was there will ever forget the episode in St. James's Hall a dozen years or more back, when there was a bad blunder in a performance of Brahms's "Tragic" overture, and when, after the end had been reached, Richter signed to the band to begin again at the beginning? The overture went this time without a hitch, and at the close Richter turned to the audience,

and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, the fault was mine,—not the orchestra's." This prompts one to observe that in one important respect Dr. Richter has until recently laboured under a considerable disadvantage in comparison with other foreign conductors. They have either brought their bands over with them, or have had placed at their disposal the highly trained permanent band of the Queen's Hall. Dr. Richter's band, though it contains many fine instrumentalists, has generally been in London a scratch band, organised for a limited number of concerts. To realise what he can "get out of" a band, one should attend a Birmingham Festival, where a first-rate and powerful picked orchestra has been playing together under him for a week on end before the regular performances begin; or, better still, one should attend one of his Manchester concerts.

Mention has been made of Dr. Richter's liberal and broad-minded views on music. If his programmes of late years have suffered from the somewhat monotonous predominance given to certain familiar Wagnerian excerpts, it is an open secret that this does not reflect his own views as to the responsibilities of a

conductor in the way of befriending all schools and encouraging young composers of all nationalities. British musicians—instrumentalists and composers alike—have always found Dr. Richter a firm friend and a most generously appreciative patron. It is enough to recall his invitation of English players to take part in the orchestra at Bayreuth, his introduction of compositions by British writers into his Viennese programmes, and his efforts to secure a hearing for them when possible at his own concerts. Nor need one refrain from mentioning that he has always been on terms of the most cordial good-fellowship with the leaders of the musical profession in England, or that his genial, unaffected bearing on the platform is a true index of the honesty, robust commonsense, and kindness which have endeared him to all who have had the privilege of encountering him in private life.

XI

M. LEGOUVÉ'S REMINISCENCES OF MALIBRAN

NOT the least interesting chapter in the attractive *Sixty Years of Recollections*, published a few years ago by the late M. Ernest Legouvé, is that devoted to Malibran. M. Legouvé, who was born in 1807, was eighty years of age when he wrote these Reminiscences, and in view of the facts that Malibran died in 1836, and that M. Legouvé was a man distinguished for his imaginative writings, it is advisable to check his anecdotes where possible by referring to unimpeachable contemporary authorities. Much of what he has to tell us is at second-hand, and here the application of the test indicated above proves his contributions to the Malibran literature to be absolutely valueless. For example, his version of her last appearance, her collapse, and her

death is singularly inaccurate and incomplete at every point. To take only one detail, he states that she died thirty-six hours after the breakdown at the Manchester Festival, whereas her illness lasted for more than a week. More interesting and valuable, however, are M. Legouv  's personal recollections of the great prima donna in Paris and Italy, where he met and heard her frequently. Finally, and most important of all, he gives us several extracts from a number of most characteristic letters which she wrote to him in the last few years of her life—letters illustrating in the most striking way the energy, the versatility, and the courage of this extraordinary woman.

His picture of her personal appearance when she first sang in Paris is worth quoting: "In her small, mauve bonnet, which nevertheless hid half of her features, she gave one the impression of an English girl who had not long left boarding-school." M. Legouv   is apparently ignorant that before visiting America she spent more than two years in England, and was educated in a convent school at Hammersmith. According to M. Legouv  , her chief attraction resided in her wonderful eyes. "The like of

them had not been seen since the days of Talma ; they had ‘an atmosphere of their own.’ Virgil said, *natantia lumina somno*. Well, Maria had eyes like Talma’s, floating in some indescribable electrical fluid, the glance of which was both luminous and veiled at the same time, like a sunbeam piercing a cloud.” Through his guardian, who was on intimate terms with the Garcias, M. Legouv   was soon introduced to the new star, and enjoyed the privilege of her friendship to the close of her short life. She came to Paris, as he notes, at a moment when the revolution in art, literature, the drama and music was at its height. It was the epoch of *Hernani*, the *Freisch  tz*, and of Beethoven’s Symphonies, and she was in her way one of the hierophants of the romantic movement. As an attempt to solve her artistic equation the following passage is well worth quoting :—

“Her genius owed everything to its spontaneity, to inspiration, to its effervescence, though at the same time, and this is one of the most characteristic aspects of that very complex organisation, nature condemned her to incessantly renewed attempts, to strenuous and assiduous labour. The mysterious fairy that

had presided at her birth had granted her all the gifts of a great dramatic songstress save one—a complete vocal instrument. Alfred de Musset said—

Ainsi nous consolait ta voix fraîche et sonore,
and further on—

Où sont ils . . . ces accents . . .
Qui voltigeaient le soir sur ta lèvre inspirée,
Comme un parfum léger sur l'aubépine en fleur ?

Well, with all deference, Malibran's voice did not flutter or skip ; Malibran's voice was not at all like a subtle perfume ; Malibran's voice was not at all a fresh and ringing voice. Her vocal organ, pathetic and powerful, without a doubt, was hard and rebellious. When Sontag sang, her notes were so limpid and brilliant that one might have compared them to a sudden flood of pure light. Malibran's voice was like that most precious of all metals ; it was like gold, but, like gold, it had to be dug from the bowels of the earth ; it had to be separated from the ore ; it had to be forged and beaten, and made pliable like metal under the hammer."

In evidence of this M. Legouvé tells us how he once heard her, while practising a difficult air, stopping every now and again to angrily

apostrophise her voice : " I'll see whether I cannot make you obey me." And he contends, not without justice, that this perpetual struggle "invested her talent with a much more powerful and original character than the poet has described." At the same time, in her acting, some of her finest effects were absolutely unpremeditated. She was not one of those actresses who die night after night on exactly the same spot. "Often, when on the stage, she carried out the strangest inspirations with a boldness which stood her in the stead of skill. For instance: One day, in the second act of *Otello*, in that grand scene so full of anguish, where *Desdemona* is awaiting the issue of the duel, she suddenly bethought herself to single out from the group of 'supers' a poor wretch whom she had not warned of her intention, and dragged him to the footlights, where, in a burst of despair and passion which narrowly missed arousing the laughter of the audience, she asked him for news of the encounter. Well, the spontaneity of the thing and her evident sincerity carried everything before them. The poor 'super' felt so utterly terror-stricken as to be perfectly motionless, and his immobility

served him admirably under the circumstances. What would have been ridiculous with any one else became sublime in her case." The word "impossible" did not exist in her vocabulary. If her voice was out of order, or her throat relaxed, instead of yielding to the inevitable, she preferred to triumph over physical weakness by sheer force of will. "The word 'limit' was unbearable to her; she found it impossible to grasp the fact that she could not do what anybody else in her profession did. . . . One day, to our great astonishment, she executed a shake on the top note [*sic*] of the soprano register. 'You seem astonished,' she said, laughing, 'that brute of a note has given me no end of trouble, I can tell you. I have been trying to get at it for the last month; I tried while dressing, while doing my hair, I tried while taking my walks, and when out riding. At last I got hold of it this morning while tying my shoe-strings.' 'And where did you find it, Madame?' 'There,' she answered, laughing, putting her finger to her forehead with a charming gesture, for one of the characteristic traits of that strange creature was to refer to her boldest attempts with a light, airy, and natural grace."

In illustration of her contempt for, or rather love of danger, M. Legouv  tells us that the first day she ever went out on horseback, he being her companion, she put her horse at a ditch and got over without mishap. And he tells an even more extraordinary story of her plunging into the sea in the Bay of Naples, although she could not swim, in the serene confidence that her friends would not let her drown. Of her readiness in retort he gives the following sample. Lamartine had been complimenting her on her gift of languages—she spoke four with equal facility. “‘Yes,’ she replied, ‘it’s very convenient. It enables me to clothe my ideas in my own way. When I am at a loss for a word in one language, I take it from another; I borrow a sleeve from the English, a collar from the German, a bodice from the Spanish.’—‘Which makes, in all, a charming harlequin’s dress.’—‘A harlequin’s dress, if you like, but the harlequin never wears a mask.’” On another occasion when some one was praising a poet whose poverty of ideas was only surpassed by his magnificent style, “Don’t talk to me of his talent,” said Malibran, “he produces a vapour bath with a drop of water.” It is interesting

to learn on the authority of M. Legouv   that Malibran shared her father's belief in the genius of her younger sister. "That little girl," she said once to M. Legouv  , "will simply eclipse all of us."

As for her letters to M. Legouv  , they prove in the main the truth of his assertion that both her glory and her art sat lightly on her. In illustration of her characteristic fondness for whimsical expression, we may quote a sentence from a letter written at Naples in 1834: "My voice is *stentoresque*, my body *falstaffique*, my appetite cannibalian." She regretted bitterly that she was not in Paris in the revolution of July, 1830. "I, a woman, am regretting every hour of the day that I had not a leg broken in the fray for that cause which belongs to the golden age." But perhaps the most characteristic, though the saddest, letter of all is that which bears date April, 1831: "There are, no doubt, many women who envy me. I fail to see what there is to arouse their envy. I suppose it is that unfortunate happiness of mine. Do you know what my happiness is like? It is like *Juliet*, and like *Juliet* stark dead; while I—well, I am *Romeo*, and weeping like him. My

heart is filled to overflowing with tears, the source of which is pure; they shall water the flowers on my grave when I shall have departed this world. The next, perhaps, will give me my reward above. Away with these lugubrious, I might say cadaverous ideas, for just now they are cadaverous. Death stalks at their head; it will soon strike at mine." These gloomy forebodings seem constantly to have obtruded themselves on her imagination. And, on the whole, we cannot help thinking that M. Legouvé is right in his view that, in the interests of poetic justice, her early death was the best thing that could have befallen her. Her voice could never have endured the strain to which she habitually subjected it, and without her voice she would have been the mere ghost of that radiant and incomparable artist whose immortality was secured by her premature death.

XII

GEORGE ALEXANDER OSBORNE

To the present generation George Osborne was little more than a name, but it is as well that by way of supplement to the information furnished in obituary articles at the time of his death in November 1893, some further facts and anecdotes connected with the career of so remarkable a link with the past should be placed on record. To most musicians of to-day he is best known as the author of a favourite showpiece for the piano-forte, which, when elderly musicians were young, enjoyed a vogue comparable to that of the "Intermezzo" from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. As a matter of fact, the late Mr. Osborne was not only a meritorious composer of chamber music, but he was the intimate personal friend of two of the most remarkable musicians of the century, Chopin and Berlioz ; the latter of whom, a fine

critic as well as a composer, spoke of Osborne's works in the following eulogistic terms : " You have published trios and various pieces for pianoforte solo, grand in construction and elevated in style ; and even without searching through your more ambitious repertory, your songs, such as ' The beating of my own heart,' ' My lonely home,' or ' Such things were,' which your sister, Mrs. Hampton, sings so poetically, are fascinating things. Nothing excites my imagination more vividly and makes it fly more rapidly to the green hills of Ireland than those quaint virginal melodies, which seem wafted by the evening breeze over the gently rippling waves of Killarney ; or those hymns of resigned love, to which one listens with inexplicable emotion, dreaming of solitude, of nature in her grand moods, of loved ones who are no more, of the heroes of ancient times, of one's suffering country, even of death itself." (Letter to G. A. Osborne, from Darmstadt, in 1843. Berlioz's *Memoirs*, chap. lxi.)

George Alexander Osborne was born in 1806, at Limerick, where his father was an organist, and his pleasant Irish brogue remained with him to the last. He was more or less self-

taught until the age of eighteen, when, owing to the severe illness of an aunt then residing in Brussels, he was sent thither by his father, who could not then undertake the journey, and having decided to embrace music as his profession, set to work with a will to complete his education. He found a patron in the Prince de Chimay, and, after some wearisome years of study and anxiety, was appointed as instructor to the eldest son of the Prince of Orange, afterwards King of Holland. After a while he was entrusted with the direction of the Concerts of the Prince of Orange, and in one of the charming autobiographical papers read by him before the Musical Association in April, 1883, he relates how, while residing at the Château de Chimay, he made the acquaintance of Malibran, and often accompanied her on horseback on her cross-country rides. Here, too, on one memorable occasion, Cherubini, while a guest at the Château, was actually induced to take the part of *Count Armand* in a performance of *Les Deux Journées*. The results, however, were disastrous, for "at the performance the Prince, who played the part of the *Water-Carrier*, had just come on the stage in the second act with the cart in which

was Cherubini, when the latter was seized with colic. In vain he tried to gain the Prince's attention, but the latter being too much absorbed in his part, did not hear the moaning, and, as the pains increased, a voice from the cart was heard by all in the theatre shouting out in a strong Italian accent, 'Drag me away from here,' which was promptly done, the audience being convulsed with laughter." We are not surprised to hear that this was the last time Cherubini appeared in an operatic performance. Of Cherubini's house in Paris Mr. Osborne gives a curious description: "His salon was a study in itself. On the walls were groups of fantastic figures made by the great Maëstro out of playing cards cut up, and their colours blended so as to represent the most comical combinations. Many hours of the day were thus spent by him—in fact, it was a mania which gave him great pleasure."

While in Paris, where Osborne enjoyed a considerable reputation as a pianist, he was intimate with Auber, De Beriot, Berlioz, and in fact all the leading musicians of the time. As regards Chopin, it is an interesting fact that on the occasion of the famous Polish musician's

début in Paris in 1831, at a concert in Pleyel's Rooms, Osborne was one of the four pianists who played the arrangement of the orchestral accompaniment to one of Chopin's Concertos, with the composer as soloist. Amongst other celebrities with whom Osborne was on terms of intimacy was Henriette Smithson—a compatriot of his, for she came from Ennis, in Clare—the famous actress whom Berlioz afterwards married. Osborne witnessed her first appearance as Ophelia in Paris, and declares that “never before or since was a greater success achieved on the French stage. I remember,” he adds, “being at a public ball, and while walking with her leaning on my arm, we were stopped by Mlle. George, the great French tragédienne, who took my other arm, making me look like an urn with two handles as we paced up and down the room. Many were the winks and nods I received, one gentleman loudly remarking ‘Look at that monopoliser of tragedy!’” *A propos* of Berlioz, it is worthy of notice that it was with Osborne that he visited St. Paul's at the Service of Charity Children. They both put on surplices and sang out of the same book, and

Berlioz, who was affected to tears, declared that never during the whole course of his life had music affected him in the same way as the singing in unison of those children. Another curious fact which Mr. Osborne has placed upon record about Berlioz is that "it was his constant habit to go into orchestras and sit with the different performers, watching them and turning over the pages for them." Of Malibran he used to tell one irresistible anecdote: "Being requested to sing in London for a charity, she consented, and chose the third act of Vaccai's *Romeo and Juliet*, on condition she had for Juliet a young sister of mine, a beautiful girl with a fine soprano voice, cultivated by Bordogni. As Malibran undertook to coach my sister in the part, I gave my consent, and it was arranged that I should conduct the opera, so as to lend confidence to my sister, as she was an amateur. After sundry rehearsals the performance took place, and all went well until after praying at the tomb of Juliet, Malibran rushed forward to sing her *scena*, but instead of doing so, suddenly returned to the tomb to pray a little more. Great was the applause in the theatre which greeted this

tragic display, and more so when she sang her *scena*. I was lost in astonishment, and after the performance asked for an explanation, which she gave me as nearly as possible in the following words: 'My dear George, I fully intended starting off with my *scena* on approaching the orchestra, but, whether from anxiety about your sister or myself I know not, your countenance had a more than usual expression of sheepishness, which imperatively obliged me to return to the tomb, not to pray, but to suppress my laughter!''

Mr. Osborne returned to London in 1843, and spent the last fifty years of his long life in our midst, endearing himself to all whom he came across by his goodness of heart and his unfailing courtesy of manner. For many years he was in great request as a teacher and performer. There is one amusing anecdote illustrative of the embarrassing popularity of his famous "Pluie des Perles," which he used to tell against himself. At a fashionable afternoon party, to which he came very late, he was invited to play, and accordingly sat down at the pianoforte, and began upon the piece in question. To his surprise and indignation

the whole audience burst out laughing ; but he was easily appeased on learning that four other pianists had already performed the same composition. To the end of his life he retained his keen interest in music, was a constant attendant at the meetings of the Musical Association, where his share in the discussions which followed the papers was generally enlivened by humorous remarks or anecdotes. His last performance in public was only a couple of years before his death at one of the Wind Instrument Society's Concerts, when he played the pianoforte part in his Sextet with remarkable skill and spirit. Later still his venerable figure might often be seen at afternoon concerts in St. James's Hall. It is much to be regretted that he never wrote his memoirs at length. But his reticence was in all probability the result of his ineradicable goodness of heart.

XIII

SIR GEORGE GROVE

DUE homage has already been paid in many quarters to the versatility and indefatigable industry of the bright spirit that was stilled last week¹ in the old wooden house in Lower Sydenham, once the residence of Charles James Fox. We do not propose, however, to write here of the builder of lighthouses, the assistant of Robert Stephenson, or the voluminous contributor to Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (of which he wrote upwards of a thousand pages), but of the enthusiastic lover of music, the commentator on the symphonies of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Brahms, the friend and patron of young musicians, in a word, of "G.," to use the familiar abbreviation by which he was affectionately known to every

¹ This paper appeared on 9th June, 1900.

one in the musical world. His love of music, it may be noted, was lifelong. Long before he was articled as a civil engineer he used to walk to and from Exeter Hall from his father's house off the Wandsworth Road to attend the Sacred Harmonic concerts, or to the British Museum to copy the scores of Handel, and as far back as 1837 spent one of the first guineas given him to buy Clarke-Whitfeld's folio edition of the *Messiah*. Ten years later, on his return from the West Indies, when he was engaged on the construction of the general station at Chester, he was the leading spirit of a small choral society in that town; and one of his first duties as the newly-appointed secretary of the Crystal Palace Company was to visit Tennyson in the Isle of Wight to induce the Laureate to write an ode for the opening of the Sydenham glass house, with Berlioz as his collaborator. He never was an executant. As he told Mr. Edwards, the author of the exhaustive and interesting sketch which appeared in the *Musical Times* of October, 1897, "Neither I nor my brother could ever play more than a 'Psalm-tune quick,' like *Punch's* organ man." And again: "I wish it to be distinctly under-

stood that I have always been a mere amateur in music. I wrote about the symphonies and concertos because I wished to try to make them clear to myself and to discover the secret of the things that charmed me so ; and from that sprang a wish to make other amateurs see it in the same way." During the last fortnight he has been repeatedly described as an eminent "musical critic," but in the limited and technical sense in which the term is commonly used it is a complete misnomer so far as "G." was concerned. His function was to act as an expositor and elucidator rather than to sit in judgment on "readings" and "renderings." As for the music itself, he had not the heart to search for flaws in the works of his heroes. It never occurred to him that Beethoven or Brahms occasionally sacrificed beauty to character, that Schumann's orchestration was "thick," or that Schubert was diffuse. In one of his letters that lies before us as we write, he says : "How *fond* one gets of Schubert ! My feeling all through the concert yesterday was one of *fondness*." Even where he was out of sympathy with a composer, as in the case of Wágnér, he never was moved to any

public expression of antagonism, and in conversation frankly regretted his inability to share the enthusiasm of others. But his references to the new romantic school were always respectful and even genial; he could not understand the necessity for invidious comparisons; and would relate, as an impressive instance of Wagner's commanding genius, the conquest effected over a *habitué* of the Crystal Palace concerts—a “mere amateur” who knew nothing of the grammar of the art—who began by regarding the *Tannhäuser* overture as all sound and fury, and ended by avowing it to be his favourite composition.

It was in the establishment of the Crystal Palace concerts and the engagement by the company of Mr. August Manns as their musical director that “G.” found his great opportunity. After a certain amount of preliminary uncertainty a good orchestra was got together, and the daily and weekly orchestral concerts were started that have done more than any other institution in England to spread the love of good instrumental music,—not even excepting the Hallé concerts at Manchester, which were founded a couple of years later. As early as

1856 Mr. Manns suggested to "G." that he should contribute a few explanatory and biographical notes to the programme of a concert given in celebration of the centenary of Mozart's birth, and so began that long series of contributions to the yellow and blue programme-books of the Saturday concerts which, after an honourable career of not far short of half a century, are now, alas ! once more threatened with dissolution. For forty years and more "G." was a constant frequenter of these concerts—in the days of his more intimate association with the Crystal Palace he used to attend the daily concerts and rehearsals as well—and until a few years back seldom failed to occupy his favourite seat in the back row of the Press gallery, generally accompanied by some fellow-enthusiast—an impecunious music-lover for choice—or, during his tenure of the Directorship of the Royal College of Music, by a batch of pupils, to whom he lent scores and pointed out his favourite passages ; escorting them, when the concert was over, to the tea-table specially reserved for Sir George's party opposite the concert-room. At these cheerful tea-parties, especially if they succeeded the performance of

a Beethoven or Schubert symphony, "G." was at his best, brimming over with high spirits and good stories—as of Chorley's red waistcoat, or the Frenchman who replied to the salutation "Au reservoir," with "Tanks"! or his own blunder in speaking of the "autimnal tunts"—and infecting all round him with his own gaiety and enthusiasm. Latterly, as his health failed, he only came when the programmes specially appealed to him, as, for example, when Joachim was playing, or the annual performance of Schubert's C major Symphony took place. For "the only Schubert"—to quote Schumann's phrase—he had, as we have seen, a peculiar "fondness," and few achievements in his well-filled life gave him greater pleasure than his discovery of the missing MSS. of the "Rosamunde" music at Vienna in 1867. Twenty years later a newspaper paragraph about a reputed find of Schubert's songs excited hopes that were speedily disappointed. "There is, alas! nothing in it," he wrote to the present writer, and goes on: "Did I tell you of a song, 'Wehmuth,' which zur Mühlen sang to me? Such a beauty; noble words and a most lovely setting." It was this unwearied

championship of Schubert—which culminated in the really touching biographical notice in the *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*—that inspired a solemn protest in the *Edinburgh Review* against the “Sydenham creed.” For the works and the character of Mendelssohn he entertained a deep reverence and affection. “Why, if he were alive now,” the present writer heard him say a dozen years ago, “I should go off to Germany to-morrow to see him,” and he bitterly resented the attitude of those modern critics who find it impossible to extol the idols of the present without belittling and abusing the idols of the past,—who cannot eulogise Wagner without sneering at Mendelssohn, or admire Brahms without attacking Handel. Beethoven was his hero above and beyond all others, and he was indefatigable in his efforts to acquire any authentic information that might throw fresh light on the inner life or the methods of work of that rugged and isolated genius. In one of his letters, commenting on a volume of musical essays, he says: “The book is deformed all through by ——’s love of disquisition in preference to fact. Now to me a fact, however small, is dear, and I

prize it and value it more than a thousand disquisitions, and try to use it as best I can." As a typical instance of his application of this principle we may note his effective use of the touching anecdote of Beethoven's deafness which Madame Sabatier-Unger, who took part in the first performance of the Choral Symphony in Vienna in 1824, related to Sir George on the occasion of her visit to the Crystal Palace in 1869, viz. how at the conclusion of the work Beethoven remained standing with his back to the audience till Fräulein Unger induced him to turn round to *see* the applause he could not hear.

Though many of his most genial and suggestive notices remained buried in the programme-books of the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts, his analyses of the nine symphonies of Beethoven, which he expanded into book form four or five years ago, afford an admirable example of his method in the domain of musical exegesis. That method was based on enthusiasm and enriched by illuminative anecdote. He was most careful to disclaim any intention to appeal to the scientific or professionally trained musician; he avoided all recondite

technicalities, confining himself in this regard to the broad outlines of the structure, and undertook his task in the spirit of a lover of beauty rather than in that of an anatomist. The width of his reading, the diversity of his tastes, and his deep interest in the personality of the composer under consideration furnished him with an inexhaustible fund of fresh and inspiring comment ; but though felicitous in the employment of literary analogies, he rarely indulged in the dangerous practice of attempting to divine the mental picture from which the composer worked. The adjustment of the story of Phaethon to the Finale of Schubert's C major Symphony may be taken as militating against the accuracy of this remark, but we would not easily spare this fascinating exercise in parallelism. "G.'s" analyses, in short, have been of immense assistance to hundreds of amateurs. They enhanced the delight attending on the performance of delightful music, and led many an unthinking auditor to an appreciation of much that lies behind and beyond the merely sensuous appeal of a musical masterpiece.

Lastly, there remains "G." himself, the soul

of kindness and consideration, who radiated sunshine wherever he went, who never missed a chance of befriending those who came in his way—even though it was a burglar caught red-handed in his own house—who magnanimously helped not a few of his detractors, and was, we believe, happy in the knowledge that the great majority of his *protégés* held him in grateful and abiding affection. Until the sudden breakdown of his health, he was one of the youngest-minded men of his age that ever lived. He was nearly sixty when he visited America with Dean Stanley, and, as the present writer heard the Dean say on his return, “devoured the Americans,” so eager was his interest in all that he saw and heard. Then followed fifteen years of overwork—the amount of time he spent on the luxury of writing letters to his friends would have fully occupied the working hours of many men who consider themselves industrious—and the wonderful elasticity which had supported him through long-continued effort and severe domestic bereavement at last failed him. Old age came upon him with a rush; the consciousness of his failing powers bewildered and saddened

him, and those who knew and loved him best could not but regard his passing as a release. He had earned his rest by a life of unflagging and earnest effort ; few men of his time had contributed more freely to the happiness of others, and none that we know of had retained in old age a greater capacity for winning the confidence and affection of the young.

XIV

A FORGOTTEN BOOK

AMONGST the few amateurs for whom a niche has been found in Sir George Grove's Pantheon, an honourable place must be assigned to Richard, second Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe, author of the *Musical Reminiscences*, published anonymously in 1824, and expanded in the course of the succeeding ten years to twice their original bulk. This work, long out of print, must be regarded as an authority of first-rate importance upon the history of vocal and, in particular, of operatic music during the period which it covers. The author, it is true, modestly owns that he had no better ground on which to form a critical judgment than "a tolerable ear and long experience of hearing the best music while it was in its highest perfection." But the internal evidence contained in his pages prove him to have been

possessed of excellent taste and discrimination, and the fact that Banti, the greatest prima donna of the last decade of the eighteenth century, consented to appear in an opera of his composition, points to greater technical proficiency than we should have credited him with on his own modest assurances. In these days, when the screen of anonymity is too often made use of for the reckless indulgence in malevolent personalities, or the raking up of vulgar gossip, it is pleasant to encounter a book in which courtesy and frankness are so happily blended. The "old amateur" writes with warmth on many subjects, but he never forgets what is expected of a chivalrous controversialist or inserts a single "good" story for the sole motive of raising a laugh. To the few details to be found in the notice in Grove's *Dictionary* we may add the following, for which we are indebted to the present head of the family. Besides *Zenobia*, the opera alluded to above, he wrote another, entitled *Il Re Pastorale*, as well as several long oratorios or cantatas—*Isaaco*, *Giuditta*, *Le Cinesi*—the autograph MSS. of which are to be seen in the library at Mount Edgcumbe. Further evidence of his devotion to music is to be found

in the organ, a sweet-toned instrument by Elliot, erected in 1812, on which he was a skilled performer. He also composed a good deal of Church music, some of his Services being until quite recently in use at Exeter Cathedral. Turning to his book, we learn that it grew out of a correspondence with a friend on music and its recent changes, as illustrated by the former state of the opera and criticisms upon its most celebrated performers, and consists of "as correct an account as my memory, naturally very retentive, could enable me to write of all the musical events that have occurred during the long period to which my remembrance extends, and particularly of the Italian Opera in this country." These reminiscences are written confessedly from the standpoint of the *laudator temporis acti*, one "who was passionately fond of music while music was really good," and who regrets that the good old style has been supplanted by the "fantastical and trifling frippery" of the modern school—*i.e.* that of Rossini and Meyerbeer, as the sequel proves. He anticipates that his criticisms, which to his contemporaries must appear very old fashioned, will, if read fifty years hence, be probably "considered to be

founded in truth and justice." This prediction is likely enough to be fulfilled, though occasionally in rather a different way from that which the writer anticipated, the chief interest attaching to his pointed criticisms often consisting in the singular accuracy with which he has forestalled, sometimes *totidem verbis*, the objections raised against the successive innovations and fresh departures which have occurred in the last fifty years. To him the human voice is the first and finest of all instruments, yet he has no sympathy with artists who subordinate dramatic conception and sacrifice all sense of proportion and fitness to mere vocal display. He deprecates the advance in complexity of instrumentation and the decadence of fine voices, while, at the same time, he passes the severest strictures on Catalani for "outrageous displays of execution," for singing variations written for the violin, for "spoiling every simple air" by ornament, and for the "luxuriance and redundancy" with which she indulged in *ad libitum* passages. As we have noted above, his interest in music centred all his life in the opera, "for," as he says, "I was carried thither in my childhood; as I advanced in years my taste for it

increased, and for the best portion of my life I was one of its most constant frequenters."

Of the many great prime donne whom he heard during half a century of opera-going, Gabrielli, more renowned on the Continent than in England, was one of the first; but his chief recollection of her performance in the opera of *Didone*, in or about the year 1775, was of the care with which she tucked up her great hoop and sidled into the flames of Carthage. She was succeeded by Pozzi, who in turn gave place to Miss Cecilia Davies—known in Italy as L'Inglesina, "the first Englishwoman who had yet sustained the part of prima donna. . . . Her elder sister played on the harmonica, an improved kind of musical glasses, and in the last edition of Metastasio's works is a cantata written for the one sister to sing, the other to accompany on that instrument." Of Galli, a contralto, who in her prime had sung in Handel's oratorios, conducted by himself, and who, by virtue of her voice and physique, often filled the part of *secondo uomo*, he tells the following pathetic story: "Galli . . . fell into extreme poverty, and at the age of seventy was induced to come forward to sing again at the

oratorios. I had the curiosity to go, and heard her sing 'He was despised and rejected of men,' in *The Messiah*. Of course, her voice was cracked and trembling, but it was easy to see her school was good, and it was pleasing to observe the kindness with which she was received and listened to, and to mark the animation and delight with which she seemed to hear again the music in which she had formerly been a distinguished performer. The poor old woman had been in the habit of coming to me annually for a trifling present, and she told me on that occasion that nothing but the severest distress should have compelled her so to expose herself, which, after all, did not answer its end, as she was not paid according to her agreement. She died shortly after." Of Danzi, a German, who had never even visited Italy, he says, that though an excellent musician, endowed with a voice of "uncommon clearness and compass," and capable of the most astonishing execution, "her performance was unsatisfactory, being too much *alla Tedesca*, and more like that of an instrument than of a human voice," a criticism forecasting the familiar charge so often levelled in modern times against German singers and composers in

regard to their treatment of the voice. Another singer of transcendental agility was Aguijari, whom, however, the writer never heard, as she sang only in concerts, and was succeeded at the Pantheon by Giorgi, a young singer of promise, known afterwards under the name of Madame Banti, as perhaps the most delightful singer of her age. The year 1778 was remarkable for the arrival of Pacchierotti, the famous male soprano—"the most perfect singer it ever fell to my lot to hear. . . . His voice was an extensive soprano, full and sweet. . . . His powers of execution were great ; but he had far too good taste and too good sense to make a display of them where it would have been misapplied, confining it to one *bravura* song (*Aria d'agilità*) in each opera, conscious that the chief delight of singing and his own supreme excellence lay in touching expression and exquisite pathos." He was an excellent musician, able to read anything with spirit and intelligence at first sight, who "could not sing a song twice in exactly the same way, yet never . . . introduced an ornament that was not judicious and appropriate to the composition." This latter sentence, which conveys to a modern reader rather a curious

impression of the attitude adopted by singers towards composers, needs the explanation which is given on p. 130 (4th edition): "Many songs of the old masters would be very indifferently sung by modern performers, not on account of their difficulty, but their apparent facility. Composers when writing for a first-rate singer noted down merely a simple *tema* with the slightest possible accompaniment, which, if sung as written, would be cold, bald, and insipid. It was left to the singer to fill up the outline, to give it the light and shade, and all its grace and expression, which requires not only a thorough knowledge of music, but the greatest taste and judgment. No one ever worked on such a canvas like Pacchierotti." As an actor, in spite of personal disadvantages, he was forcible and impressive, but it was in the concert-room, and in private society most of all, where he shone, "giving way to his fancy," when amid a small circle of friends, "and seeming almost inspired. . . . I have often seen his auditors, even the least musical, moved to tears while he was singing." Lord Mount-Edgcumbe also mentions that he had more than once the good luck to hear him sing "a cantata of Haydn's, called

Ariane à Naxos, composed for a single voice with only a pianoforte accompaniment, and that played by Haydn himself: it is needless to say the performance was perfect." The season of 1780 was one of the finest our author ever remembers. Pacchierotti returned, and Madame Lebrun (*née* Danzi), Ansani, a fine tenor, and Pozzi constituted a most capital company. Still, the brunt of the work was borne by Pacchierotti, and in subsequent seasons the lack of great female Italian singers began to be seriously felt. Pozzi returned no more to England, and Banti's star had not yet fully risen. The operas most admired at this era were, according to Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, "the *Rinaldo* of Sacchini, *L'Olimpiade*, and *Exio*, pasticcios; *Quinto Fabio*, by Bertoni, master of the Conservatorio dei Mendicanti at Venice, and *L'Eroe Cinese*, by Rauzzini." (The predilection for classical subjects evinced by composers of this epoch is truly remarkable. Every second opera mentioned is a *Didone* or a *Giunio Bruto*.) At this point the writer digresses for a while, in order to give some account of comic opera from his earliest recollections. In this line he remembers Sestini, a lively singer with a "gritty voice," and a

favourite with the *gros public*, but who gradually sank from *prima* to *secunda buffa*, and, after condescending to accept any engagement to keep herself from starving, finally died in England in abject poverty. He also remembers Todi, Bernasconi, Pozzi, and, finally, Allegranti, whose voice, though thin, was extraordinarily sweet, high, and agile. Such a combination of qualities seems to have been common at this epoch, and perhaps reached its culminating point in Aguijari, mentioned above, who is known to have sung in Mozart's presence passages extending over three octaves and reaching C in *altissimo*! Allegranti excelled in the florid style and was a good actress, but the public found a sameness in her efforts, and "with more than our usual fickleness, she was less liked in every subsequent opera, and was so disregarded by the end of the second season that she went away." The favourite operas in this department were *La buona figliuola*, of Piccini, in which Lovattini, a famous tenor, had formerly shone; Paisiello's *Frascatana*, the music of which our author calls "*de tout âge*"—it was often revived by Storace and Catalani—and the *Viaggiatori Felici*, of Anfossi. The

next section of these *Reminiscences* extends over the years 1783-1785, during which the author was making the "grand tour" customary in the case of all young noblemen of that period. He mentions that at Spa, where he heard Pacchierotti almost daily in private, the latter gave one public concert, the comparative ill success of which he attributes to the fact that "a great part of the audience was French, who then would like no music but their own." If our neighbours have succeeded in removing this stigma, it has not proved altogether an unalloyed advantage to native composers of merit, as M. Saint-Saëns and others have pointed out in reference to Berlioz and Bizet. At Berlin, where there was a good Italian opera company, he mentions that Todi, so little thought of in England, was there "so much admired that, as the good Germans are more steady and less given to change than we islanders, she never quitted the country." He also heard comic operas at Dresden, Prague, and Vienna. At the last-named city, Storace and Kelly were both performing, and here also he heard Bernasconi in Gluck's *Alceste* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*. At Venice, where he went for the Fair of the

Ascension in 1784, the opera was poor, but he heard good performances of oratorios in the chapel of the Conservatorio dei Mendicanti on Sundays and holy-days. "Not only all the vocal, but the instrumental parts were executed by women concealed from view in a grated gallery." He speaks in particular of one morning concert, when he enjoyed "the almost incredible sight of an entire orchestra of female performers," proving the truth of the old adage that there is nothing new under the sun. We may also remind our readers that the interesting letter on the style and practice of the violin, written by Tartini, and recently quoted in the Appendix to Ole Bull's *Memoir*, was addressed to a lady amateur of that instrument. At Padua Lord Mount-Edgcumbe heard an anthem sung by Guadagni, at the Church of St. Antonio. Guadagni had performed in opera in England, in 1771, as a soprano, but now, late in life, he sang as a contralto. From thence he went to Paris for the summer, "when, as there was then no Italian Opera, music could give me little pleasure. Though some of their lighter pieces pleased me, the *grand opéra* to all ears but French can only give *pain*." He heard their

principal singer, Mlle. Saint Huberti, at Lyons, "a fine actress, and in her singing a little less violent and extravagant than the generality of French singers, but still too much in their style." She was known afterwards in England as an *émigrée*, where she was murdered in her house at Barnes along with her husband, the Comte d'Entragues, by an Italian servant, who immediately committed suicide, the motive of his crime being personal hatred and not love of plunder. At Paris our author heard the famous Madame Mara sing for the first time at a *Concert spirituel*, in the old theatre of the Tuileries. *Inter alia*, she sang "I know that my Redeemer liveth," which was announced in the bills as "Musique de Handel, paroles de Milton," and he adds, briefly, "the French had not the taste to like it." Returning to Italy in the autumn he spent the carnival at Rome, where, in alluding to performances he mentions a fact which may be new to some of our readers. "At that time no female was permitted to appear on the stage at Rome in any character whatever, operatic, dramatic, or dancing. In the singing parts, therefore, (male) sopranos were employed as their substitutes, generally the youngest, and,

consequently, not the best, being chosen for their looks rather than their ability. Martini, however, known from his birthplace as "il Senesino" (not to be confounded with the famous Senesino), was an exception to the rule, and a very fine singer. At Naples, at the San Carlo, Lord Mount-Edgcumbe heard a good performance of Paisiello's *Antigone*, with Pozzi, Rubinelli (*primo uomo*), and David (tenor) in the cast. Comic operas were acted at the theatre Dei Fiorentini, where Coltellini was a great favourite, a very pretty woman, a clever actress, and an admirable dancer, who, wise in her generation, "adapted herself to Neapolitan taste by singing popular airs and frequently whole operas in their jargon." Though not a success elsewhere, "she was nevertheless an enchanting performer." Returning through Rome, he attended all the ceremonies of the holy week, and was much impressed by the music at the office of *Le Tenebre*, in the Sistine Chapel. Spring being the time for fairs, during which there was always an opera in any town of importance, he heard several on his journey northward. Thus, at Mantua, he heard Marchesi and Pozzi, of whom, in taking leave, he

says that though she had risen to the head of her profession, and had a voice of uncommon clearness and brilliancy, "yet its tones were so birdlike, and there was such a want of feeling in her manner, both of singing and acting, that she was, on the whole, a cold and uninteresting performer." The opera was *Arminio*, by Tarchi. At Reggio he heard, for the first time, "that first of singers, Banti . . . in Sarti's *Medonte*." This, he adds, was his *bonne bouche*, and the last music he heard in Italy, the theatres of Milan and Turin being shut as he passed through. On the whole, he was disappointed with the music in Italy. "The passion for music cannot be so great in that land of song as we are apt to suppose; for on inquiring in any town if the opera was good, I was uniformly answered, 'Oh! sì; bellissimi *balli*!' and indeed, in general, the dancers are more thought of, and attended to in greater *silence* than the opera itself. . . . Yet the ballets are long and wearisome, absolute tragedies in pantomime—I saw 'Romeo and Juliet' *danced*." Opera in England seems to have fallen during the year of his absence into an unsatisfactory condition. Rauzzini's reappearance did not save the manager from

bankruptcy, and the theatre was prematurely closed. Lord Mount-Edgumbe returned to England at the end of the summer of 1785, missing the second of the festivals in Westminster Abbey. Of these performances he remarks: "On the whole, it was acknowledged, even by foreigners, that no performance was ever heard so perfect or so surprising." New instruments were invented and made for the occasion, and nothing omitted to lend completeness to the whole. The theatre was reopened in 1786, though the company was not fully made up till the middle of the season. Mara was the prima donna, and the following extract throws an interesting light upon the musical taste of the time. The first opera in which she appeared was *Didone*, a pasticcio "for which Mara had made a very judicious selection of songs, introducing four of very different character, by Sacchini, Piccini, and other composers." Mara, though a poor actress, and lacking a good presence, was a first-rate artist, unrivalled in the *bravura* style. Her voice was clear, sweet, distinct, and powerful enough, though rather thin. She was also very successful in some of Handel's most solemn airs. "Still

there appeared to be a want of that feeling in herself, which, nevertheless, she could communicate to her hearers." In the spring of 1787 Rubinelli made his first appearance, a male contralto of fine quality, but limited compass. "His style was the true *cantabile*, in which few could excel him : his taste was admirable, and his science great." In the following year, besides the production of several new operas, Handel's *Giulio Cesare* was revived with the view of inducing the king to revisit the theatre called his own. Nominally one opera, this was in reality a medley from Handel's Italian works. "Little of the original music was retained, and many of his most famous songs from other operas were introduced—'Verdi prati,' 'Dove sei,' 'Rendi sereno il ciglio,' " etc. This "ancient music" suited Rubinelli and Mara admirably, but the minor parts were indifferently filled. However, the king came two or three times, and the general public were pleased ; "at least it filled the house by attracting the exclusive lovers of the old style who held cheap all other operatical performances." Meantime, the comic opera had begun to reassert its attractiveness with such singers as Benini, a

finished artist, really better suited for the *opera seria*, and Mengozzi, a good tenor, who, however, suffered severely from the climate. Both were replaced early in 1787 by Storace, who had been the original representative of Susanna in the *Nozze di Figaro*, and Morelli. Of the latter we read that he "had a bass voice of great power and good quality, and he was a very good actor. Having been *running footman* to Lord Cowper at Florence, he could not be a great musician." The inference to be drawn from this comment is hardly complimentary to the sister art! Storace was English on her mother's side, but went early to Italy, and was not heard in England until she was admittedly the first *buffa* of her time. "She had," says Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, "a harshness in her countenance, a clumsiness of figure, a coarseness in her voice, and a vulgarity of manner that totally unfitted her for the serious opera, which she never attempted. But her knowledge of music was equal to anything, and she could sing well in every style, as was proved by her success in Westminster Abbey, when the great space made her voice sound less harsh." Storace, who was an excellent actress, settled

entirely in England, and quitting the Italian, made the fortunes of the English opera at Drury Lane for a while, aided by Mrs. Crouch, Mrs. Bland, Kelly—the Irish tenor who, like Storace, had assisted in the first performance of the *Nozze di Figaro*—and others. In 1788 the season opened with comic opera only, but after the Italian carnival Marchesi made his debut in *opera seria*, an event which was awaited with immense excitement. He excelled more in *bravura* than *cantabile*, and shone particularly in recitative, by reason of the energy and passion of his declamation, but wanted Pacchierotti's pathos, and his good taste in ornamentation. At the comic opera the good performers had been exchanged for an execrable set of new ones. The dancers, too, were "insufferably bad," and to crown all, the unfortunate King's Theatre was burnt down. Next winter comic and serious opera were carried on, on a smaller scale, at "the little theatre in the Haymarket," with Storace and Sestini in the former, Marchesi and Mara in the latter. There were also some excellent concerts at the Pantheon, for which Pacchierotti returned, and once he and Marchesi both sang at a private concert given by Lord

Buckingham, Marchesi of his own will yielding precedence to his senior—*i.e.* by singing before him and allowing him to sing the last song. The King's Theatre was rebuilt, but had the wind taken out of its sails by a rival establishment, that of the Pantheon, which had been transformed into a theatre by Wyatt, the original architect. Here the regular opera—serious and comic—was carried on with two first-rate companies and ballets. “On the whole,” says Lord Mount-Edgumbe, “I never enjoyed the opera so well as at this theatre,” Pacchierotti's “Duettos” with Mara being the most perfect pieces of execution he ever heard. Meantime the proprietors of the Haymarket Theatre got together a company—before they had secured a license. They had only one good singer, David, a tenor of great repute, and a good set of dancers, and at last succeeded in getting leave to open the theatre with music and dancing! The performances consisted only of vocal concerts with ballets, and were only kept alive by party feeling, which ran high against the Lord Chamberlain and the “Pantheonites.” David consequently had not a fair chance for displaying his very great talents. In

the season of 1792 the Pantheon was burned down, and opera again took refuge in "the little theatre in the Haymarket." The chapter closes with some remarks on the three famous male singers that lived within the writer's memory, "the last of their line of any note or distinguished merit that Italy ever produced. . . . The style of the first (Rubinelli) was chaste and dignified ; that of the second (Marchesi), florid and spirited ; while the third (Pacchierotti), combining all styles, and joining to exuberance of fancy the purest taste and most correct judgment, united every excellence."

The schism which raged in the musical world in the seasons of 1791-92 was healed in the following year, and a union of parties being effected, the Haymarket Theatre was reopened with the best company available in England. Of the tenor Kelly, from Drury Lane, the author writes that he was a good musician, but in spite of his long residence in Italy, "he retained or regained much of the English vulgarity of manner." Madame Mara, already declining in voice and favour, actually condescended to sing as *Polly Peachum*, in the *Beggars' Opera*, at Covent Garden. Her subsequent history was

disastrous : for “in the maturity of charms which had never been great,” she eloped from a drunken husband with a young flautist, lived for several years in Russia, and reappeared in England at fully seventy years of age to give a benefit Concert, at which her tones were compared to those of a penny trumpet. “We are now come,” says Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, “to an interesting period in operatical history, the arrival of Banti, whom I must ever consider as far the most delightful singer I ever heard.” Banti—to whom, by the way, Mr. Shorthouse makes allusion in his tale *The Little Schoolmaster Mark*—like Grisi, was not a good musician, but her instinct stood her in unfailing stead. Her voice, according to the author, was a rich *voce di petto*¹ of singularly uniform beauty throughout, and her acting, always excellent, rose on occasion to heights of remarkable power. She made her debut in Bianchi’s *Semiramide* or *La Vendetta di Nino*, introducing into her part “a fine air by Guglielmi from the oratorio of *Deborah*, with violin obbligato. . . . No opera ever had greater success, or a longer

¹ It is to be observed that Lord Mount-Edgcumbe uses the phrase *voce di petto*, *voce di testa* of the voice as a whole, not of a particular register of the voice.

run, than this." In a subsequent season—that of 1800—she performed for her benefit an opera by Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, *Zenobia*, set to Metastasio's drama, "and gave to the music an effect which its own merits could never have produced in other hands." The "first man's" part was allotted to Roselli, a male soprano, but was taken by Benelli, a tenor. "After this year," adds the author, "Roselli sang no more, nor had we ever another soprano at the opera." This statement turns out to be premature, for after a lapse of just twenty-five years, Velluti made his appearance in Meyerbeer's *Il Crociato in Egitto*. A new generation had grown up, however, to whom this kind of voice was unfamiliar, and the feeling was so strong against the revival that unusual precautions had to be taken. Managers then realised that it was highly impolitic to combat a prejudice founded upon a natural and healthy basis, and this time the male soprano disappeared for ever from the operatic boards. The list of operas in Banti's repertory is given in the article in Grove's *Dictionary*, the writer of which, by the way, has embodied a great deal of Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's remarks *totidem verbis*, without the

use of quotation marks. Lord Mount-Edgumbe never wearied of hearing Banti, but the public apparently did, and the manager accordingly let her depart in 1802. Before her departure she sang at her own benefit with Mrs. Billington, the new star, in Portogallo's *Merope*, conceding the leading rôle to her rival. "The curiosity to hear these two celebrated singers together was so great that the theatre overflowed, and even ladies were obliged to sit on the stage for the want of other places." In the summer and autumn of 1802 the author of these *Reminiscences* took a short tour to the Continent. At Stuttgart he heard a charming opera by Weigl, *L'Amor Marinaro*, in which the first woman appears in male attire. He adds, "I endeavoured a year or two ago to get this opera performed here, but could not succeed, though it was acknowledged to be likely to please. The *travestissement* of the first woman was, I believe, the chief obstacle." In connection with his stay in Paris he observes: "Of French music the less that is said the better . . . the *grand opéra* was in no respect improved; that human ears can bear it is marvellous."

Mrs. Billington, *née* Weichsel, had the

advantage over her rival and predecessor Banti of being a thorough musician, coming as she did of a musical stock on both sides. "Her voice, though sweet and flexible," says Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, "was not of that full nature which formed the charm of Banti's, but was rather a *voce di testa*, and in its very high tones resembled a flute or flageolet." Excelling in the execution of florid passages, Mrs. Billington lacked pathos of expression, and was an indifferent actress. The writer confesses that he only began to appreciate her great merits from the very circumstance which rather lowered her popularity—namely, the arrival of Grassini. Of their relative merits he remarks, with great point :—"As every one has eyes, and but few musical ears, the superior beauty was the most generally admired, and no doubt the deaf would have been charmed with Grassini, while the blind must have been delighted with Mrs. Billington." They appeared alternately for two years, during which Braham, lately returned from Italy, now first began to challenge public attention as a leading operatic tenor. On Braham Lord Mount-Edgcumbe has a great deal to say, and says it well. He

praises the quality of Braham's voice, his knowledge of music, etc., and after remarking that it is certain he *can* sing well, regrets that he should do otherwise, quitting "the natural register of his voice by raising it to an unpleasant falsetto, or forcing it by too violent exertion . . . departing from good style and taste, which he knows as well as any man, to adopt, at some times, the over-florid and frittered Italian manner; at others, falling into the coarseness and vulgarity of the English." To revert to Mrs. Billington, it is interesting to encounter, amid the list of operas in which she excelled, Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito*, the first of his works for the stage ever acted in this country. After three years of divided reign, Mrs. Billington and Grassini both retired, the former in the plenitude of her power, the latter with impaired resources and diminished popularity. Both were replaced by "the great, the far-famed Catalani," who for many years reigned alone. The bulk of Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's criticisms upon her gifts, and abuse of them, will be found in the article "Catalani," in Grove's *Dictionary*. One passage not quoted there is worthy of note, in which, after censuring the

“fantastical excess” of her embellishments in *ad libitum* passages, he goes on—“She is fond of singing variations on some known simple air, and latterly she pushed this taste to the very height of absurdity by singing, even without words, variations composed for the fiddle. *This is absolute nonsense, a lamentable mis-application of that finest of instruments, the human voice, and of the delightful faculty of song.*” We have underlined these last words as exactly indicating the standpoint of the writer—one which cannot be said to be that of all modern musicians. In this context, however, it may be admissible to offer a reassuring word about the decadence of great voices. A similar cry was raised—by Lord Mount-Edgcumbe himself, amongst others—in the period which immediately preceded the palmy days of the greatest operatic quartet the world has probably ever known. Between the years 1805 and 1825, with one or two exceptions, there was a complete dearth of great singers, and then came Pasta, Malibran, Grisi, Rubini, Mario, Lablache, Alboni. Such a galaxy of vocal talent the operatic world has never known before or since. Turning again to Catalani we are glad of the opportunity of

transcribing the following amusing paragraph :—

“ Whenever I hear such an outrageous display of execution, either vocal or instrumental, I never fail to recollect and cordially join in the opinion of a late noble statesman, more famous for his wit than for love of music, who, hearing a remark on the extreme *difficulty* of some performance, observed that he wished it was *impossible*.” Lord Mount-Edgcumbe adds, in a note, that the same lord “being asked why he did not subscribe to the Ancient Concerts, and it being urged as a reason for it that his brother, the Bishop of W——, did, ‘ Oh ! ’ replied his lordship, ‘ If I was as deaf as my brother I would subscribe too. ’ ”

Catalani was not only successful in serious opera, but achieved distinction in the *opera buffa* as well. “ Though the outline of her features is decidedly tragic (almost Siddonian), yet she can relax them into the most charming smile, and assume the character not merely of gaiety, but even of *niaiserie* and of arch simplicity. . . . With all her faults, therefore (and no great singer ever had so many), she must be reckoned a very fine performer ; and

if the natural powers with which she is so highly gifted were guided by sound taste and judgment, she might have been a perfect one." Catalani's intolerance of rivalry and perpetually enhanced terms wore out the patience and exhausted the purse of English managers, and she quitted England in 1813, after which date she "found it more agreeable to her taste, and probably more advantageous to her interest, to travel throughout nearly the whole of Europe, giving concerts, at which she is generally the only vocal performer. She has made one such visit to England [in 1824] and may make more, as she retains a partiality for this country, where she has been more extravagantly admired and paid than in any other."

In the supplement to these *Reminiscences*, published in 1834, Lord Mount-Edgcumbe cannot resist seizing the opportunity of taking his "last leave" of Catalani, who, after fulfilling a festival engagement at York, in the summer of 1828, traversed the whole island, and came to stay at Plymouth with the Earl of Northesk, then Port Admiral, at whose house the author met her in private, and heard her at one public concert, for the first time since 1813. Her

voice was still wonderfully fresh, and though diminished in compass had gained in expression. In particular, he was delighted with her singing of "Rule, Britannia"—which used to throw sailors into transports of enthusiasm—"which last I always thought she sang better than anybody." "The last notes," he adds, "I ever heard from her were in my own house, accompanying herself on the pianoforte, in some beautiful little Italian canzonets. . . . I have since heard of her from Florence, near which town she resides, and I hope will long do so in health and happiness." On Catalani's departure, in 1813, "a new aera began in our opera." At this point, however, he retraces his steps in order to relate what had taken place in the realm of comic opera. Morichelli and Bolla were the two principal performers in the years 1792-1800, the latter of whom, in her benefit, introduced the innovation of *speaking* the dialogue in prose, without recitative, "which had not a bad effect." Storace was often called in, likewise Mrs. Billington, who, when she performed with Naldi, an excellent actor and musician, in the *Fanatico per la Musica*, "took the opportunity of displaying

her talents as an instrumental performer, by accompanying herself on the pianoforte.”

Lord Mount - Edgcumbe winds up this section with a survey of the last two periods, and a comparison of the five great female singers comprised therein. Mara and Mrs. Billington belonged to one class, and resembled each other closely. Both were good musicians, with sweet agile voices, excelling in the *bravura* style. “But neither was an Italian, and consequently both were deficient in recitative ; neither had much feeling, both were deficient in theatrical talents, therefore they were more calculated to give pleasure in the concert-room than on the stage. . . . The other three, on the contrary, had great dramatic talents. . . . They were all likewise but indifferently skilled in music, supplying by genius what they wanted in science. . . . Their distinctive differences, I should say, were these : Grassini was all grace, Catalani all fire, Banti all feeling ; and, by a singular coincidence, forming almost exact counterparts of the three great singers before compared together, the first may be said to have borne a strong resemblance in her style to Rubinelli, the second to Marchesi, and the third

to have united in a high degree all the varied excellence of Pacchierotti." The "new aera," which began with the departure of Catalani, was, in the opinion of the author, marked by a great deterioration in the style of operatic composition and a corresponding decadence in the art of singing and a falling off in the supply of good voices. The distinction between serious and comic operas was nearly broken down, while "the separation of singers for them" was entirely at an end. A mongrel compromise arose called *semi-seria*. "The dialogue, which used to be carried on in recitative, is now cut up . . . into *pezzi concertati* or long singing conversations, which present a tedious succession of unconnected everchanging motives, having nothing to do with each other; and if a satisfactory air is for a moment introduced which the ear would like to dwell upon, to hear modulated, varied, and again returned to, it is broken off before it is well understood or sufficiently heard, by a sudden transition into a totally different melody, time, and key." One might almost imagine that this was a strait-laced modern Kapellmeister falling foul of Wagner, whereas it is Rossini whose vicious innovations

excite the strictures of the "old amateur." "Single songs," he continues, "are almost exploded, for which one good reason may be given, that there are few singers capable of singing them. . . . The acknowledged decline of singing in general (which the Italians themselves are obliged to confess) has no doubt in a great measure occasioned this change. . . . The generality of voices are basses which, for want of better, are thrust up into the first characters . . . and take the lead in operas with almost as much propriety as if the [double bass were to do so in the orchestra. . . . Composers therefore having few good voices, and few good singers to write for, have been obliged to adapt their compositions to the abilities of those who are to perform them." This is perfectly true, we may add, parenthetically, of Mozart, who generally wrote his songs last, with special regard to his cast; and the fact that the principal male rôles in two of Mozart's operas—*Count Almaviva* and *Don Giovanni*—were written for a *basso cantante*, as it was then called, is an effective confirmation of the passage quoted above. "Songs have disappeared, and interminable

quartettos, quintettos, and sestettos fill their place. . . . Every opera is filled with such pieces, which, in fact, are so many *Finales*. These, after wearying the attention for a longer time than half-a-dozen old songs, generally conclude by a noisy crash of voices and instruments, in which the harmony is frequently distracted, *each personage engaged in the scene having, perhaps, to express a different passion* [The italics are ours. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe here forestalls the scathing criticism of this anomaly delivered by Berlioz], and the whole vocal part almost overpowered by so loud and busy an accompaniment that the voices themselves are nearly lost. It is really distressing to hear the leading voice strained almost to cracking in order to be audible over a full chorus and full orchestra, strengthened often by trumpets, trombones, kettledrums, and all the noisiest instruments." In this sort of composition, he goes on, good lungs are more useful than quality or style. "Very good singers, therefore, are scarcely necessary, and it must be confessed that though there are now none so good, neither are there many [? any] so bad as I remember in the inferior characters.

In these levelling days, equalisation has extended itself to the stage and musical profession ; and a kind of mediocrity of talent prevails which, if it did not occasion the invention of these melo-dramatic pieces, is, at least, very favourable to their execution." We make no excuse for transcribing the foregoing remarks almost *in extenso*. They are not only interesting and instructive as forestalling the strictures passed on more recent innovators, but in so far as singing is concerned, they are decidedly encouraging. Who knows but that we, too, may be on the eve of an amazing revival of vocal excellence—a melodic reaction provoked by the excesses of over-elaborate orchestration ?

It was against Rossini, then in the zenith of his fame as a composer, that Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's criticism was primarily directed. He allows him genius and invention, but not good taste, charging him, further, with constant plagiarism from himself, a weakness for noisy instrumentation, and inability to compose music appropriate to strong situations. He proceeds : "I have often heard it seriously remarked that his operas sound best when performed without the voices [what some Philistines say nowa-

days of Wagner]. Strange praise for *vocal* music, which I have considered as the finest vehicle for feeling and for passion, and as giving greater expression to words than can otherwise be conveyed ; therefore when it is really good they must be inseparably united. At the same time, I must allow there is truth in the remark, for Rossini gives so much importance to the orchestra, and so labours his accompaniments, that the vocal part is really often the least prominent, and overwhelmed, not supported." Nor was Lord Mount-Edgumbe the only critic who fell foul of Rossini as a voice destroyer. The correspondent of the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, writing from Venice in April 1819, mentions a certain Countess Dieterichstein at Rome, who declared that his passages were so straining and ruinous for both throat and chest, that if he wrote operas for ten years longer there would be no more singers left in Italy. Giorgi, for whom Rossini wrote the *Cenerentola*, is spoken of as already completely ruined (see Grove's *Dictionary*, vol. iii. p. 177, note). Rossini, curiously enough, wrote operas for exactly ten years longer (the date of his last, *William Tell*, being

1829), though he lived for nearly fifty years after this complaint,—lived, also, to write new embellishments in the *Barbiere* for Madame Patti. For not the least significant of the innovations introduced by Rossini was his refusal to allow to his singers the latitude granted by the Italian operatic composers of the eighteenth century. They left it to the singer to fill in the ornamental details, while Rossini preferred to supply those details himself.

Mozart was the only writer of opera who at this period could get a hearing beside Rossini. Of him Lord Mount-Edgcumbe speaks in terms of the highest praise. “His genius was not only original, it was inexhaustible; his productions are full of diversity, and all possessed of intrinsic merit. The frippery and meretricious style of modern music is to the ear like tinsel to the eye . . . but it will be transitory and speedily lost in the fluctuations of taste . . . while the name of Mozart, with those of his two great countrymen—Handel and Haydn—will live for ever, and his compositions, like theirs, descend as sterling gold to posterity.”

Of the operatic singers who appeared in the

following seasons, Ronzi de Begnis, a handsome woman with a sweet flexible voice, who excelled in *buffa* parts, and Camporese, were the only two prime donne of talent. Ronzi, as she was familiarly called, was a great favourite by reason of her good looks and genial ways. Camporese had talent of a much higher order, so much so that, writing in April 1823, Lord Mount-Edgumbe declares her to be much the best singer of her time, and "the only one that has ever at all brought back to my recollection, or in any degree resembled her to whom I shall always think every other must yield, the unique, the incomparable Banti." This, it should be remembered, however, was written before he had heard Pasta or Malibran. The succeeding section, No. 8, is devoted to an account of English music, which shows that his predilection for the old Italian masters by no means blinded him to the undoubted merits of native compositions. He gives the preference to our Cathedral music as an aid to devotion over that of Italy, and declares "our glees, our only national music," to be unexcelled in their way. Of English female singers he remembers in particular Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Bates, who,

as Miss Linley and Miss Harrop, were at the head of their profession, and quitted it at the height of their fame. "Mrs. Sheridan to an angelic face (Reynolds painted her as St. Cecilia) added an angelic voice," which, "combined with her touching expression, produced an effect almost heavenly." Mrs. Bates had been a pupil of Sacchini, and would, doubtless, have been famous in the Italian style but that her talents were diverted into the Handelian groove by her husband, a learned musician and fine organist, the man who first "imagined and arranged" the Handel Festivals in the Abbey. Mrs. Billington, he adds, was the only other singer who could be compared with them, and such a comparison would not be fair, as she must be reckoned in school and style as an Italian rather than an English singer. The postscript, which closes the first edition of these *Reminiscences*, is interesting from the fact that it alludes briefly to the proceedings of the opera season of 1824, and the success of Pasta, "now become a delightful performer, a finished singer, and excellent actress."

A propos of the season of 1824, Lord Mount-Edgumbe mentions the appearance of Madame

Colbran-Rossini in her husband's opera of *Zelmira*, "containing, as I was told, some of Rossini's *noisiest* pieces, of which I subsequently heard one at a concert : it was stunning." We need hardly explain that the "old amateur" does not employ this adjective in its modern slang acceptation. He adds that Rossini had to pay forfeit for not composing an opera he was engaged to write for the theatre, so much absorbed was he "in pleasures and convivial meetings." Catalani acted five or six times this season in her favourite comic opera of *Il Fanatico per la Musica*, in which she introduced some new song every night. Ronzi continued to be a favourite, but was soon eclipsed by Pasta, who, after attracting little notice as "second woman" with Camporese, had now risen to the top of her profession. The season of 1825 opened inauspiciously, owing to a panic caused by the reported insecurity of the Opera House. After a temporary sojourn at the New Theatre Royal, Haymarket, the Opera returned to its regular domicile. Pasta paid these shores but a flying visit ; Ronzi fell ill, lost her voice, and returned to Italy ; Vestris seceded to the English stage ;

Caradori, an excellent *seconda donna*, was for the time being *hors de combat*, so the gap was filled by a *débutante*, a mere girl, the daughter of the tenor Garcia, known afterward by her married name of Malibran as one of the most gifted and fascinating singers of the century. "Her extreme youth (she was only seventeen at the time), her prettiness, her pleasing voice and sprightly easy action as *Rosina* in the *Barbieri*, in which part she made her *début*, gained her general favour." In the same year she went to America with her father and brother, and when she next returned to England had fully verified Velluti's prediction that she would rise to the front rank of her profession. For this year was remarkable, as we have already mentioned, for the arrival after the lapse of some twenty-five years of Velluti, the last male soprano who ever trod the boards in opera in this country. "Unusual precautions," says Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, "were deemed necessary to secure a somewhat partial audience, and prevent his being driven from the stage on his very first entry upon it." This we may remark is positively denied by Ebers in his *Seven Years of the King's Theatre*, p. 267, though certainly

more credit attaches to the testimony of Lord Mount-Edgcumbe. Velluti made his *début* in *Il Crociato in Egitto*, an opera "by a German composer named Meyerbeer, till then totally unknown in this country. The music was quite of the new school, but not copied from its founder, Rossini; it was original, odd, flighty, and might even be termed *fantastic*, but at times beautiful." The season of 1826 began with the same opera company. Caradori was "unaccountably removed" to make room for a mediocre singer, Bonini, a pupil of Velluti's. Velluti himself, already declining in popularity, brought out for his benefit an early work by Rossini, *Aureliano in Palmira*, in Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's opinion one of the best of that master, "as he had not yet in his efforts at originality fallen into that wild unnatural style which characterises so many of his works. There are in it many beautiful melodies and but little of the extravagant ornament and cramped passages he subsequently delighted to introduce." Pasta returned, but Velluti would never appear with her, preferring Bonini, trained in his own method, to a singer who would have overpowered him by the strength and volume of her

voice. The author gives a full account of Pasta in her famous rôle of *Medea*, from which it appears that he considers a great deal of her genius consisted in the art of taking pains. "She is really a first-rate performer, both as singer and actress, and that by mere dint of talent without any very pre-eminent natural qualifications ; for though a pretty woman, her figure is short and not graceful, and her voice, though powerful and extensive, is not of the very finest quality, not free from defects." Her performance in *Medea* both surprised and delighted Lord Mount-Edgcumbe : "None since Banti's had equalled it, and perhaps she even excelled her great predecessor as an actress ; though in quality of voice she infinitely falls short of her." He particularly mentions Pasta's singing of "Di tanti palpiti" as surpassing that of all her rivals. She took it much more slowly, so "doing away with its country-dance like character" ; and he adds in a note that this altered *tempo* was more proper, "as the *motivo* is taken from a Latin Litany, which Rossini has not scrupled to adopt as his own. His other favourite cavatina 'Di piacer mi balza il core' is a wild air sung by the Sicilian peasants ;

so much for the *originality* of his two most popular songs."

The events of the season of 1827, so far as the prime donne are concerned, are neatly summed up in a quatrain which occurs in one of Praed's most charming pieces, his "Good-night to the Season," his estimate exactly tallying with that of Lord Mount-Edgcumbe when he sings—

Good-night to the season !—the Toso,
So very majestic and tall ;
Miss Ayton, whose singing was so-so,
And Pasta divinest of all.

Praed's *vers de société*, we may incidentally remark, contain a good many allusions to the chief stars in the musical firmament. Another favourite poem, "My Partner," must have been written about this time, for in it the speaker describes how he "hoped Ronzi would come back again." No excuse is needed for interpolating this passing allusion to a writer the tunefulness of whose verse must always endear him to musicians. As one of his biographers puts it, "his rhymes ring truly, like a chime of bells." Lord Mount-Edgcumbe speaks of Toso as a brilliantly handsome girl, and if Brambilla,

another *débutante* with a fine contralto, was as attractive-looking as the engraving of her in Ebers's *Seven Years of the King's Theatre*, the deaf and the blind must have been equally charmed this season. There is a long digression at this point in these *Reminiscences* on the subject of the mismanagement of the King's Theatre. The season was now divided into portions, and singers engaged accordingly, some for three months, some for less, with the result that the public might be "deprived of their greatest favourites and of the most admired opera in the height of their popularity, and others substituted not so well approved." He notes that Pasta got for three months double the amount that Banti ever received for a whole season, and after pointing out the obvious advantages, apart from economy, attaching to the older system of small but efficient and continuous companies, proceeds to give, in the form of a retrospect, a great deal of interesting information relating to the gradual rise in the subscriptions to the opera and the alteration in the character of the audience frequenting the various parts of the house. The whole passage is a *locus classicus* in its way, and may be thus briefly

summarised : In the old days, 1770-1790, the price of a subscription to a box for fifty representations was twenty guineas. This was a saving of five guineas to serial subscribers, admission to the pit being half a guinea, and full dress *de rigueur* in both. The boxes were fewer, more commodious, and, as well as the pit, filled with the best "classes of society." All these frequented the coffee-room at the end of the performance. Over the front box was the five-shilling gallery for respectable folk not in full dress, and over that again the three-shilling gallery. The rise in price took place in Catalani's second year, when the price of a whole box of six seats was raised from 180 to 300 guineas for sixty performances. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ*. Persons of moderate income could no longer afford the luxury. Subscriptions were now halved and subdivided, few persons having the sole ownership of a box. Boxes came to be let for the night, and single tickets sold when not used by the proprietor. A regular system of speculating in boxes thus arose, those not taken for the season being often put up to auction ; while, on the other hand, the value of pit tickets was unduly depreciated. The system of giving

free passes or even boxes to create the appearance of a good house dates from this epoch. "The pit has long ceased to be the resort of ladies of fashion." He adds, however, that it has been "improved since, by parting off the front rows into single seats, called *stalls*, which may be had for the night, or for a longer period." The abuses which Lord Mount-Edgcumbe exposes, and for which he suggests judicious remedies, have lasted almost without intermission to our own days. Wherever improvement has been perceptible it has been by yielding to that democratic spirit by which, in the sphere of creation, nearly all the best modern work has been animated. We cannot, then, share Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's regret that the pit should have ceased to be the resort of ladies of fashion, holding as we do that precisely in the pit and gallery is to be found that section of musicians and music-lovers with whom rests the future of English music.

The season of 1827 ended disastrously, but with 1828 an improvement was perceptible. There was a good company with "*Pasta permanently* at its head," and in contrast with the "labour in vain of the ballet so sadly

deficient in stars," lamented by Praed in his stanzas on the preceding season, there were a good set of dancers, and, most important of all, the luckless Ebers was replaced by a manager "much more likely to conduct the concern with judgment and, consequently, with success." Sontag, preceded by extravagant eulogium, made her *début* with immense success in the *Barbieri*. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe pronounces her voice to have been of "great extent, brilliant clearness, and correct intonation," but wanting in feeling and expression. It was to her credit, however, that though unsurpassed in the execution of elaborate *fioriture*, she was eminently moderate in the display of such vocal ornamentation. This season was remarkable for the fact that three of the chief singers were Germans—Sontag, Caradori (*née* Munck), and Madame Schutz, a good mezzo-soprano. The operatic novelties, none of which was very successful, were only three in number—Meyerbeer's *Margherita di Anjou*, *La Rosa Bianca e la Rosa Rossa*, by Mayer, and Bellini's *Norma*, all nominally connected with English history or scenery. What a strange circumstance it is that it should be left for foreign composers

to choose subjects from English history, while native writers sedulously avoid them! Sir Charles Stanford's *Canterbury Pilgrims* and his *Shamus O'Brien* furnish exceptions to a rule which we cannot help thinking more honoured in the breach than in the observance, particularly when there is now such a genuine appreciation of operas in the vernacular. Lord Mount-Edgumbe winds up this section by observing that there was never within his memory so large a number of eminent singers assembled at once in England. Besides those engaged at the opera, there were Velluti, Ronzi and her husband, De Begnis, Toso, and other good concert singers. Furthermore, Catalani was shortly expected, being engaged for the triennial festival at York. "The rage for music," he goes on, "is revived throughout all classes, and certainly the taste of the public is much improved, good operas by Mozart, Salieri, Weber, and other excellent masters having been performed in English with great success."

The supplement which follows is prefaced by a brief statement as to the nature of these final additions which, with the exception of a detailed account of the festival held in Westminster

Abbey in 1834, were founded more on the reports of others than on the writer's own observations. He only went to the Italian opera twice in the years 1829-1834. Still, he heard some of the chief singers at private concerts, and in many ways kept in touch with the musical world. Of Malibran, who replaced Pasta in the year 1829, he relates the following agreeable and characteristic anecdote. After stating that she excelled in the comic opera he adds that she "actually condescended" to take the third and least important part in Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto*. "From an insignificant character she raised it to a prominent one, and very greatly added to the effect of that excellent opera, which was then performed admirably throughout." *Semiramide*, in which the writer heard Malibran, bored him by its length, and as though that were not enough, it was followed by one act of the *Barbiere*, in which Sontag appeared and sang Rode's "Variations" with astonishing neatness and accuracy. It is satisfactory to find in Lord Mount-Edgcumbe a vigorous opponent of the practice of giving these "strange medley performances." This season was noteworthy as that in which

Lablache appeared for the first time before an English audience. "His voice," says Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, "was not only of deeper compass than almost any ever heard, but when he chose, absolutely *stentorian*, and he was also gigantic in person." On the other hand, his dramatic talent was considerable, a rich vein of humour rendering him invaluable in comic parts. For several seasons Pasta and Malibran shared the honours, no other prima donna of note appearing, while of the tenors, Rubini was *facile princeps*, the performance of Bellini's *Son-nambula*, in which both he and Pasta sang and acted to perfection, being especially memorable in the annals of the opera. The season of 1832, unsuccessful so far as the achievements of the Italian opera were concerned, was epoch-making for the success which attended the visit of a German company, which gave several operas of the best composers in that language. The first produced was *Der Freischütz*, already a great favourite; but the success of the season was *Fidelio*, with Madame Schroeder-Devrient, "one of the most striking and effective performers I ever saw," in the title rôle. "The whole opera was throughout well sung and

acted, . . . but it was in the choruses, especially, that the excellence of the German singers was most displayed. These were performed in a manner quite new to an English audience." He adds that the Prisoners' chorus was repeated every night, and assigns as the cause of this greater excellence "the very superior knowledge of music possessed by the Germans, who study it more scientifically than any other nation." Next year he saw the *Zauberflöte* and Weber's *Euryanthe*, in which latter Devrient shone. In the following season, however, she would not revisit England, and the German opera collapsed. A French company, headed by Madame Damoreau, had also come over in 1832, in order to perform Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, which the "old amateur" denounces with amusing vigour as a type of the immorality and impropriety of the French stage. "I saw it acted at Covent Garden, and never did I see a more disagreeable or disgusting performance; the sight of the resurrection of a whole convent of nuns, who rise from their graves and begin dancing like so many bacchantes, is revolting; and a sacred service in church accompanied by an organ on the stage not very decorous.

Neither does the music of Meyerbeer compensate for a fable which is a tissue of nonsense and improbability." Tamburini appeared for the first time in England at the close of this season, but his efforts, and even those of Malibran, came too late to repair the losses of the manager, who became bankrupt, the singers not even receiving their salaries. The season of 1834, which began unfortunately, was redeemed from failure by the advent of Giulietta Grisi, who at once came to the front, "combining every requisite for the situation. . . She is an excellent singer and excellent actress, in short, is described to be as nearly perfect as possible, and is almost a greater favourite than even Pasta or Malibran." The male singers were unusually strong also, comprising Rubini, Tamburini, Zuchelli, Curioni, and a good Russian tenor named Ivanhoff. Only one novelty was produced, Rossini's *Siege of Corinth*, of which Lord Mount-Edgcumbe remarks that "it has in it but little originality, though a great deal of noise; a siege and Turkish music giving ample scope for the brass instruments." Of the new Italian operatic composers he speaks slightly, with the exception of Bellini. All

the rest either feebly imitated Rossini or outdid him in extravagance. "The modern German composers," he continues, "are decidedly better than the Italians, and even the French have latterly produced works which may claim precedence over them."

At this point the record of the writer's experiences as an opera-goer is brought to a close, the remainder of his pages being devoted to a very full account of the Musical Festival in Westminster Abbey in 1834, as compared with those given half a century earlier. The original festivals were held annually from 1784 to 1787, then interrupted by the king's illness, and resumed in 1790, that of 1791 being the last. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe readily admits the improvement in the instrumental department, and the high standard of merit maintained by the choruses, but declares that there "are not now to be found singers of such excellence as then existed, while of the most eminent of the present day few are now in England." . . . "The good singers for solo parts were few in number, not one transcendently excellent, and those whom it was possible to collect were not employed as much or as advantageously as they

might have been." The series consisted of four Concerts, the supreme direction resting with Sir George Smart. Two-thirds of the Abbey was filled with holders of tickets at two guineas, and the seats for the rehearsals fetched frequently more than double the regular price of half-a-guinea. "The arrangement was incomparable : there was neither hurry, crowd, nor confusion." On the occasion of the former performances in 1784 and the following years, the ladies all wore full dress : "now the permission or rather the direction, to wear morning costume detracted much from the grandeur of the spectacle," although the king, his suite, and the directors were all dressed in splendid uniforms. "The female singers, following the example of the audience, appeared in dishabille, hardly respectful in presence of their Majesties." The disposition of the performers, again, seems not to have been so judiciously planned as on former occasions, and Lord Mount-Edgcumbe cannot altogether acquiesce in the adoption of the Continental practice of substituting a conductor with a *bâton* for a leader. He could not even see the leader : "Sir George Smart alone was conspicuous, and he was rendered more so by

an opening left in the centre of the front seat, for no imaginable reason but to exhibit the conductor's back to all the auditors. . . . In that central point formerly sat Madame Mara ; the gap recalled her to the minds of those who remembered her there, and seemed to be left vacant because nobody was worthy to fill her seat." Lord Mount-Edgcumbe entirely endorses Dr. Burney's account of the overpowering effect produced by the earlier performances on many auditors, and compares Mara's power over the sensibility of the audience to that of Mrs. Siddons. "In the present instance," on the other hand, "I am sorry to observe that I neither witnessed nor experienced any similar feelings. I saw no tears, no faintings : nor did that general thrill pervade the hearers which then was manifested by signs so unequivocal. Admiration was expressed with calmness and moderation, without excitement, without emotion." It is only fair to urge in explanation of this more tranquil demeanour on the part of the audience that while it is undoubtedly true that as people become more highly civilised they learn to keep their feelings more under control—particularly in a race like ours, where reserve

has always been considered to constitute an integral part of good breeding—it should also be borne in mind that the thoughts which lie too deep for tears are precisely those which are evoked by listening to music. The works performed at this festival were chiefly those of Handel. Selections from Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven were also given, but while a great admirer of the two former, he gives Handel the preference over them all “on such an occasion and in such a place.” As to Beethoven, he frankly confesses that he is but slightly acquainted with his works. The exertions of the soloists in the main failed to please him, the allotment of parts being also open to grave question. The directors were met by a serious obstacle in the lack of a “prima donna assoluta.” Neither Malibran nor Pasta was available, and Catalani had retired. Decidedly the most prominent amongst the singers, in the author’s opinion, was Braham, who, though advanced in years, was in the full possession of his powers, and filled the Abbey with ease, while no fault could be found with the taste and judgment of his performance. Amongst the women, he considers Caradori to have been incontestably the

best. "She sang with her usual excellence, . . . was well heard . . . and gave universal satisfaction, but was employed much too little, having only three songs allotted to her in the course of all the concerts." Second in order of merit he places Miss Stephens, who left her retirement for the occasion. Her voice had lost in volume and flexibility, but still gave pleasure in songs of moderate compass and easy execution. Third came Madame Stockhausen, a very good singer and musician, though "hardly strong enough for the higher style of music." Of the rest, Mrs. Knyvett, a very good second, was alone deemed by him worthy of mention, though no fewer than fifteen other principal female vocalists were engaged. Three or four belonged to the playhouses, the majority of the rest being pupils of the new Academy of Music, amongst whom Miss Clara Novello, "a very young girl with a clear, good voice," was by far the best. Amongst the men there were some *passés* favourites, like Vaughan and Belamy, while of the less-known performers, Sapio, a fine tenor, Seguin and Phillips, both good basses, alone deserved notice, and might well have had more allotted them. "*Numeri-*

cally no concert certainly was ever so well provided with vocalists," but, as he insists, numbers do not make amends for want of excellence. Of principals there were forty, exclusive of five opera singers—Grisi, Rubini, Ivanhoff, Zuchelli, and Tamburini. Of the latter Tamburini alone did well. Grisi broke down at rehearsal—how unlike, he adds, the former generation of Italians, who sang Handel to perfection! "So entirely does the bad modern opera music unfit singers for everything that is good." The first day's performance opened with the Coronation Anthem, "Zadok the Priest," and was followed by Haydn's *Creation*, which, though singling out some numbers for high praise, he pronounces to be in parts very languid and insipid. "With verdure clad," as sung by Caradori, was quite the feature of the concert, and "The heavens are telling" produced a great impression. The third part of the day's performance was a selection from *Samson*, in which Braham distinguished himself. The second day opened with an extremely miscellaneous selection, consisting of fragments from various works by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Against this

“mangling system” Lord Mount-Edgcumbe inveighs with just severity, “saying that it is impossible to conceive a greater patchwork than the first part of this concert. The other two parts consisted wholly of Handel’s *Israel in Egypt*, with a good deal of interpolation in the words and music, some of the latter not even being written by Handel. The third day began with Haydn’s “Hymn to the Emperor,” “a soft and pleasing melody,” the whole of the rest of this part being occupied by Handel’s *Judas Maccabæus*. In connection with the ’cello accompaniment, played by Lindley to the air “O Liberty,” Lord Mount-Edgcumbe offers some interesting and pertinent remarks on the abuse of cadenzas *ad libitum*. “It was to be wished that he [Lindley] had not finished his symphony with so long a cadence, not quite in accordance with the air. I would here, by the way, remark that not only instrumental but vocal performers also are much too apt to indulge in the bad habit of tediously spinning out their cadences to an unreasonable length. In the latter, especially, there cannot be a greater fault. When cadenzas *ad libitum* invariably closed every song, it was a positive rule to con-

fine them, shake included, to one breath. A cadence *a due fiati* was by the Italians considered an undisputed mark of a bad singer. I counted no less than four respirations in one cadence, the deepest taken just before the shake, disjoining it from the passage of which it is the natural and expected close. The effect of this is indescribably bad. To compress these extemporaneous effusions into a short compass, and so to sustain and husband the breath as to effect it, requires more skill than all the lengthened desultory wanderings which are now sometimes heard." The second part of the concert was miscellaneous, beginning with a Motet of Mozart's "in that sort of Latin verse in doggerel rhyme common in Roman Catholic services, but very offensive to English and classical ears." Lord Mount-Edgcumbe comments on the use made of two boy choristers in Pergolesi's "Gloria in excelsis" in the following terms, which are well worth quoting: "Boys can never sing really well; and though their clear bell-like tones have often a charming effect in the cathedral services, they are not sufficiently formed to be brought forward as principals on an occasion like this. Such exhibitions are like schoolboys

reciting their lessons in public, a thing not to be done except before select and partial audiences." Braham's performance of "Deeper and deeper still" and "Waft her angels," he pronounces to have been perfect, and, perhaps, the best performance of the festival. Then followed a double chorus by Leo, and airs from two Litanies by Mozart, the Latinity of which was a sore trial to Lord Mount-Edgcumbe. Of the last piece he remarks that the Latin, crabbed as it was, admitted of a very simple rendering — *Transubstantiation*. The remainder of this part was taken up by a selection from Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*, "parts of which were very beautiful." The third part consisted of Anthems by Purcell and Pergolesi, airs from Handel's *Solomon* and *Joshua*, a Sextet from Haydn's first Service, in which Clara Novello distinguished herself, and a Quartet by Himmel, led by Tamburini, in which he was so prominent that it practically resolved itself into a solo. The fourth and last concert consisted solely of *The Messiah*, the error complained of before—the little use made of the best singers—being more conspicuous on this than on any of the preceding days. Braham,

Caradori, and Miss Stephens had only one air apiece, while the bass songs were divided amongst three singers, Seguin, the best, getting none. It is curious to us to be told that owing to the lack of a good counter-tenor, "He was despised" was, *faute de mieux*, assigned to a *female* contralto, who also gave "He shall feed His flock." Lord Mount-Edgumbe adds that "on one of the former occasions it was executed to perfection by Rubinelli." Summing up his judgments in the light of his recollections of the earlier festivals, he says that though the instrumental part was now nearly as good as it could be, the choral resources available appeared to him less strong; while in the department of principal vocalists there certainly was no comparison. The last few pages are occupied by some curious criticisms and forecasts. He apprehends that Handel's popularity has already gone out of fashion, though he cannot himself acquiesce in such a verdict. Of the new works introduced in deference to the demand for novelty, "much was dull, much insipid. . . If even Haydn's *chef d'œuvre*, the *Création*, which is so beautiful in many of its parts, failed of making an impression, nothing else could."

He would have preferred the admixture of old English church music as better suited to the style of Handel. And then, he adds, all the music would have been Protestant. For if it were objected that this latitude was due to the inability of Italian performers to sing in English, this excuse was overborne by the fact that the former generation of Italian singers in many cases spoke English like natives, and could all sing it creditably. And so, after a few other criticisms, the "old amateur" bids his readers a kindly farewell, remarking that in his case first impressions have been the most lasting and indelible.

Where a writer expresses himself with such engaging sincerity as the author of these *Reminiscences*, it is obviously unfair to point out in what respects his predictions have been falsified or his verdicts reversed. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe would doubtless be glad to find that his apprehensions as to the hold of Handel upon the affection of the English people have proved unfounded. On the other hand, the popularity of Rossini, though undoubtedly impaired, has stood the test of time more successfully than Lord Mount-

Edgcumbe anticipated. Our aim in stringing together such extracts as seemed most likely to interest our readers has been to avoid gratuitous comment, and to let the author speak for himself as much as possible. When a writer approaches his subject with such impartiality, such long experience, and such enthusiasm as the "old amateur," the result can hardly fail to be attractive to those who are interested in the history of musical criticism. A great many of the strictures on the license adopted by executants are just as pointed and appropriate now as when they were penned seventy years ago. Even where we differ from the writer *toto cælo* it is impossible to help admiring his loyalty to the old Italian opera and standards of art long since grown obsolete. A cultivated, if not a profound, musician, endowed with a very keen appreciation for purity of style, and a corresponding distaste for meretricious ornament, Lord Mount-Edgcumbe is able to read the present generation many wholesome lessons. Exempt from the influences which too often assail and bias the judgment of professional musicians, he viewed the musical events of his time from the disinterested standpoint of

an amateur—using that term in its fullest and most honourable acceptation—and has left in the pages summarised in this chapter a record of those events which, for entertainment and instructiveness, is not to be surpassed by any work of the same nature and compass in this department of British musical literature.

PART II

I

STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY MUSICAL CRITICISM

I.—THE PRECIOUS

DUDELSACK'S NEW SYMPHONY

IN this world of inevitable compromise and imperfect accomplishment, one must not ask too much, but be content with what the gods give us. And when they give us Dudelsack, with his magnificent sensuality of conception, and his superb clarity of style, we are fain to fly to superlatives for the adequate expression of our opinion. 'Tis true that this miraculous youth has not yet completed his twelfth year, and hence his music is now and then slightly lacking in the virile intensity of Wagner or the dainty filigree work of Albert Chevalier. Still, with these inevitable deductions, Dudelsack's Symphony is a marvel of gay, voluptuous,

and irresponsible originality. The tender, twittering *Scherzo* sped along—shall we say?—like a covey of canaries in full cry; while the suavely serene *Andante* is instinct with a positively Pentecostal fervour. To analyse its science, to discuss its school, to measure its genius with the foot-rule of pedantry, may prove a congenial task to those archæological academics who prefer Marie Antoinette to Marie Lloyd. For ourselves, we scout such meticulous methods. But to revert to our Dudelsack. In the interpretation of the caressing and—shall we say?—[Oh, yes! for goodness sake say anything you like.—ED.] Corybantic cachinnations which stud the *Finale* with their pellucid effluvium, the orchestra, indeed, attained, perhaps, let us say, almost, if not quite, on the whole, to a plane of delicious distinction. Dudelsack the conductor, it is true, is still somewhat to seek. He lacks the Jove-like calm of Richter, the dæmonic chryselephantine delirium of Mottl, the fanatical *finesse* of Henry J. Wood. Still, on the whole, one must not ask too much of a boy of eleven. And already he is immense, Goliardic, Abracadabrous, with the features of a sub-tropical Shelley and the translunar hysteria

of an incipient Bollandist. His gestures, in particular, have a certain convincing *bizarrerie*, which is entirely Quasimodal. Under his persuasive beat the very trombones exhaled a softness and sweetness that were overwhelming, we had almost said Xanadu-like. . . . On the whole, then, we are profoundly impressed with the delicate—shall we say?—accomplishment, or perhaps we should rather say the accomplished delicacy of our Dudelsack. Never has an artist swum into our ken more richly or radiantly endowed with the supreme qualities of distinction, delicacy, and accomplishment. We feel sure that Berlioz, could he revisit the glimpses of the moon, would have rejoiced at the exquisite efflorescence of erotism which, perhaps, may be, indeed, shall we say? positively exudes from the score of Dudelsack's Opus 1. We know that his magnificent melodic genius would have endeared him to Gluck. We are ready to lay crippling odds that the late Cardinal Newman would have hailed him with ecstasy. We know, in conclusion, and what more need be said? that to us, at any rate, he is a lovable, delicate, distinguished, vital, and accomplished Thing.

II.—THE FACETIOUSLY ANALYTICAL

SYMPHONY (No. 1) IN C.—Constantine Dudelsack

First Lap

After a brief preliminary canter by all the instruments over an introduction of five bars, a fine start is effected in excellent tune by two unaccompanied horns. . . . Fortified by a long rest, the trombones then take up the cue, and, settling down into their stride, soon distance all competitors. . . . Here the first subject is given out by a muted triangle, with an effect which is so absolutely indescribable that it must be allowed to speak for itself. Listen to it. Drink it in. A subsidiary episode of extraordinary beauty is also given to the same touching orchestral voice. . . . But the strings will no longer tamely consent to take a back seat, and, sprinting up the straight, rush at the *Tutti* which concludes the first lap. Time, 4 min. 28 sec.

Second Movement

The strings continue to make all the running throughout the opening of the new movement, until the rival department of "Woodwind, Drum, and Co.," reinforced by plenty of brass, begin to do a roaring trade on their own account. The business is then gradually distributed amongst several wind instruments, each of which sets up shop on his own hook or crook, with results so admirable that they may be allowed to speak for themselves. The remainder of this movement cannot be traced at length; but any candid customer must admit the superiority of the retail over the wholesale treatment of the leading themes.

Third Innings

The score of this symphony is well known to be one of the best on record. Paradoxical as it may appear, its beauty, though matchless, has afforded opportunities for distinction to all the twenty-two instruments engaged in it—from the first violin down to the triangle. The disposition of the players, differing slightly

from that generally adopted at Lord's, is nevertheless so obvious as to call for no detailed comment from us. After a few maiden overs, in which the brilliant agility of the drummer behind "the sticks" is specially noticeable, a sudden *crescendo* is marked in the score, owing to the fast but imperfectly stopped deliveries of the horn. From time to time the solemn tones of the trombone are heard in the deep field, as though clamouring for employment. Nor is this pathetic appeal in vain. Great activity is also displayed by all the other players. How this is kept up, and why, and with what result, will be clearly seen by all.

Finale

This movement has been fancifully compared by some writers to the legend of "Dædalus and Icarus." For our own part we prefer to see in it a musical representation of the inter-university boat-race, Mr. Wyndham's recent speech on the Education Question in Ireland, and a volunteer review at Brighton on Good Friday. An exhaustive comparison with each and all of these cannot, for reasons of space, be entered on here; but the points of resemblance are so numerous

and striking that Dudelsack may be allowed to speak for himself. He is so entirely lovable in every mood, ponderous and lightsome, warming up or cooling down, that we are always glad to see him enjoying himself. The peroration, in which the "three courses to be pursued" are simultaneously enunciated, is a *locus classicus* in modern symphonic music. Absolutely incomprehensible and absolutely great, this passage will be readily followed with perfect ease by the naked ear. Dudelsack, like an "old parliamentary hand," is so helplessly entangled in the sophistical web of his own poluphloisboisterosity as to be utterly unable to extricate himself. Nor do we care to extricate him either. He may be safely left to shift for himself.

III.—THE TRUCULENT

IS BEETHOVEN PLAYED OUT?

I own to having a considerable kindness for Beethoven. Indeed, were it not for the absurd attempts made in certain quarters to claim absolute finality for his achievements in every department of modern music, I might have allowed this discrowned King of Sound a short reprieve. But, as that other old dodderer Shakespeare remarks: "If 'twere done, 'twere well 'twere done quickly." It is iniquitous for those who revel in supreme enlightenment to refrain from emancipating their less gifted brethren from a state of ghastly fetish-worship. And it is distinctly unkind to Beethoven himself to flatter him into the persuasion that his immortality is secured, when, as a matter of fact, it is undermined on every side by the corrosives of the new criticism. Again, it must be remembered that I have recently carried through, with a really reckless expenditure of coruscating invective, a long, arduous, but entirely triumphant campaign against the ineffable im-

postor Mendelssohn. The jerry-built prestige of that sickly charlatan lies blasted into infinitesimal smithereens beneath the vitriolic onset of my indomitable stylograph. I have imported into the domain of English musical criticism the most aggravated features of the *Judenhetze*. I have violated all the decencies of professional etiquette, and when any of my colleagues have dared to express views that differ from mine, I have promptly pilloried them by name, and published elaborate details as to the minuteness of their washing bills. I have done all this and more. I have libelled pedants, pulverised professors, thundered at the gates of Kensington Gore, and sapped the foundations of Tenterden Street. And still, in the immortal phrase of the classic comedian, I am not happy. I want another punching-block, a new Aunt Sally. Something, in short, that I can kick, cuff, pummel, bash, and knock-out to my heart's content. Now there is art in the choice of an Aunt Sally as in that of other things, and speaking from a pretty exhaustive and exhausting acquaintance, I am bound to admit that there are some serious drawbacks connected with the process of "going for" an

antagonist who is still in the land of the living. The creature, for example, may run shrieking to the Law Courts, or shoot you at sight, or behave in some similarly unpropitious and ungentlemanly way. But with a dead opponent you are simply on velvet. And thus, having already wiped the floor with the unspeakable Mendelssohn, I have decided to repeat that salutary and instructive process with the remains of the Bonn gentleman. Some fatuous owl may remark, "Why, I've heard you crack up Beethoven like anything." My good fool, of course you have. But permit me to observe that there is no finality about my critical attitude. It is everlastingly expanding and developing. There was a time when I adored Toy Symphonies; now I confess to finding the scoring of the *Walkürenritt* decidedly anæmic. Besides, as I have said above, I must have an Aunt Sally, and I won't be happy till I get it.

I think I shall have no difficulty in convincing all but the most bestial of bank clerks that my views on Beethoven are in no wise the result of temper or petty personal bias. I have given the man every chance. Years

ago, when I used to play the violoncello worse than the vilest passenger in the Philharmonic orchestra, I was everlastingly scraping away at his posthumous quartets. But I frankly own that I could make nothing of them. As a boy I almost persuaded myself into believing that I admired the pomatummy clap-trap of the "Moonlight" Sonata, or the sickly goody-goodness of the *Allegretto* of the Seventh Symphony. Now and again the puissant magnetism of Mottl has almost redeemed me to the half-baked ineptitudes of the C minor. But shorn of the adventitious glamour conferred upon them by a great conductor or a great artist like D'Albert or myself, Beethoven's scores simply will not stand the test of performance. What can be more insufferably coarse than his *tuttis*; more tedious than his never-ending perorations; more fatuous than his habit of repeating some footling little phrase sixty billion times over and over again; more outrageous than his disgraceful infatuation for the drum? I frankly confess that I do not at all like agreeing with any other contemporary critic, but when Mr. Henry T. Finck says that Beethoven did not understand the genius of

the pianoforte, I am obliged to say ditto to that gentleman. Still, grant that Beethoven's musical thoughts were cheap and nasty, that his instrumentation was thin, that as a conductor he was not fit to black Mottl's boots, and that as a writer for the voice he is beneath the contempt of such an artist as the incomparable de Lara—grant all this, and yet the man might be allowed some title to consideration if it were not for the damning and loathsome stain that besmirches his connection with this country. *Beethoven took money from the Philharmonic Society!* In those seven words a whole Iliad of guilt is summed up. But this is not the worst. He not only took hundreds of pounds from that atrocious institution—that *Cloaca Maxima* of iniquity—but he actually wrote and spoke of it in terms of gratitude and even enthusiasm! Now the man who would behave in such a way is *anathema*. He has sinned against decency and the light, and may expect no quarter from me. There are many black pages in the annals of music, but this is the blackest of them all. Needless to say, the Philharmonic Society has made all possible capital out of this deplorable incident, and the

bust of Beethoven is always in evidence at their concerts, as though the unhappy composer were condemned to do perpetual public penance for his crass and inconceivable turpitude.

That Beethoven was the parasitic pensioner and fulsome eulogist of the Philharmonic Society immeasurably outweighs, in my opinion, any petty or niggling services he may have rendered the evolution of art. It brands him at once as an excerebrose scallywag, an eviscerated elasmobranch, worthy of being hurled neck and crop along with Mendelssohn into the limbo of discredited desuetude. When you come to think of it, however, it is no more than might have been expected of a man who beslavered the Viennese aristocracy with dedications instinct with sickening snobbery, and actually fell in love with a countess! There is another very painful trait in Beethoven which has never yet met with the reprobation it so thoroughly deserves. I refer to his ridiculous and contemptible deference to the dictates of conventional morality, as illustrated by his choice of an opera book. It is said that he rejected heaps of librettos on the ground of their immorality! What a melancholy con-

fession of weakness on the part of a would-be great man. He wanted, forsooth, a theme which should glorify and exalt a love that was at once pure and devoted, thus deliberately shutting his eyes to the great and noble truth that it is only by perpetually trampling on the decalogue that the artist can ever justify his existence. Whenever I am condemned for my sins to witness a performance of *Fidelio* I thank my stars that the young Italians have at least rendered such "books" impossible in the future, and have proved to demonstration the incalculably superior æsthetic attractiveness of squalor and suicide as compared with the bogus Biblical shoddy affected by Mendelssohn and Beethoven. The story of *Leonora*, had it been treated by De Maupassant or Zola, or even Gyp, might have been endurable—even amusing. But in the form adopted by Beethoven it reeks of the proprieties of Peckham; it is as ditch-watery as a small tea-party at Denmark Hill.

Last, and most significant of all, Beethoven was no controversialist. So far as I have been able to make out, he never formulated his views in a literary form, or analysed and vindicated

his own system, or abused his contemporaries in the public prints. I know that some drivelling dolts probably applaud this attitude as indicative of a dignified artistic reserve. For my own part, I can see nothing in it but the most contemptible and culpable cowardice. The artist who has not at his fingers' ends the entire vocabulary of Billingsgate and Bargeedom, and who is not capable of turning on the hose of his invective at a moment's notice full blast on the devoted head of any one who ventures to differ from him in the smallest particular, is simply not worth a twopenny tinker's curse. Beethoven would never have been a good musical critic. He had neither the brutality, nor the egotism, nor the entire absence of humour which are indispensable to the adequate discharge of the duties of such an office. There are scores of other weighty reasons for answering the question at the head of this article in the affirmative, but the foregoing may suffice. Beethoven could not compose. Beethoven was the *protégé* of the Philharmonic Society. Beethoven respected the Ten Commandments. Beethoven was no journalist. In the face of these appalling crimes and my cool and dis-

passionate exposure of them, I do not think that any one will want to exhume the Bonn gentleman again.

IV.—THE INDISCRIMINATELY EULOGISTIC

The advantages conferred on metropolitan music-lovers by such an institution as the Royalty Concerts are so numerous and notorious that the task of criticism may be said almost to savour of supererogation. On the other hand, to omit detailed mention of a single item in the rich musical menu provided last night by the energetic and enterprising director of this noble institution might so easily be misconstrued that we readily undertake what is always a grateful and congenial duty. And, first of all, let us cordially compliment the management on the success with which they have striven to combat monotony by the introduction of new and thoroughly topical features into their programme. The initial item—a Whistling Quartet proffered by the Siffleurs Parisiens—left nothing to be desired on the score of purity of expression, penetration of tone, and unanimity of *ensemble*. After five recalls these

talented artists gratified the audience by another exquisite exhibition of their sibilatory prowess, the piece chosen being an arrangement, as a four-part song, of the familiar "Ave Maria" of Bach-Gounod. Madame Claudia Popkins, who followed with Tarley Bindells's pathetic ballad, "The Maid of Calabar," is a prime favourite with the Royalty audience, and seldom, if ever, has her luscious *portamento* been displayed to greater advantage than in the realistic refrain of this delicious ditty. The words of the song, moreover, are of such exquisite beauty that we cannot refrain from transcribing them *in extenso* :—

THE MAID OF CALABAR

By the blue lagoons of Bonny, where the oleanders blow,
Dwells a little dusky maiden, pacing sadly to and fro.

By the *Kibbi* where we trysted, still I see her standing
there,

With a wreath of red *chupatties* crowning her luxuriant
hair.

"O return," I hear her calling o'er the cruel harbour bar,
"O return again and love me, on the coast of Calabar!"

O, the happy days we lingered 'neath the luscious mango
tree,

Listing to the love-sick numbers of the gentle chimpanzee !

And she'd lift her amber eyelids, asking me in accents bland,

"If you love your Fanti sweetheart, why forsake this coral strand?"

And I'd answer, "Lovely maiden, marry you, alas! I can't;

But I'll think of you for ever as a sister or an aunt."

And my thoughts still wander southward to our ancient trysting-place,

Where they manufacture biscuits for the faithful canine race;

And I see my ebon angel standing on the distant shore

(She espoused an Egba chieftain in the spring of '74);

O farewell, my sweet enchantress! O farewell, my Bonny Star!

In my heart you live for ever, little maid of Calabar!

Here, again, the demand for an encore was imperative, and Madame Popkins graciously responded with a further proffering, viz. "The Lonely Limpet," in which the sorrows of the isolated crustacean are so tenderly depicted in the lyric of Leonard Potère and the melody of Beppo Francatelli. The appearance of the veteran tragedian, Mr. Storn-Barmer, who had been specially engaged for this occasion to recite "Three Blind Mice," was the signal for a wild outburst of enthusiasm lasting for several minutes. The simple charm of this classical *morceau* was admirably brought out by Mr. Storn-Barmer's refined enunciation,

and as the audience, like the voracious Oliver, clamoured for more, the talented artist good-naturedly proffered, with wonderful effect, the whole of the first book of *Paradise Lost*. At the close of this most impressive performance, which only occupied three-quarters of an hour, agreeable relief was afforded by the gratuitous distribution of a choice assortment of superb sandwiches thoughtfully provided by the generous *impresario*, after which the enormous audience, like giants refreshed, devoted their attention to Master Philidor Chanticleer's electrifying rendering of the new patriotic song, "Who dares to twist the Lion's Tail?" Master Chanticleer, who wore the uniform of a field marshal, and employed one of the new patent megalophonic vocal cord expanders, recently invented by Mr. Edison, excited the most unbridled enthusiasm among his auditors, and after a double encore, sent the house into fresh paroxysms of patriotic ecstasy by his clever performance of a hornpipe to the accompaniment of the pipers of the Mounted Marines. Some graceful feats of conjuring by Professor Trecardi, pianoforte solos by Mr. Maxim Krupp, a short sermon by Dr. Bannerman (to which the versatile divine

added a performance on the flying trapeze by way of an encore), and some sensational headers from the organ loft into a tank on the edge of the platform by Miss Godiva Plunger, brought the first part of the programme to a close at a few minutes past twelve o'clock. In the interval, which was pleasantly diversified by the ejection of a gentleman who had incautiously observed that his wife's first cousin had married a Free Fooder, a brief but charming hypnotic *séance* was conducted by Madame Pippa Passmore, who threw one of the attendants into a seven days' trance, and promised that the subject should be left on the platform until his release at the next Royalty Concert. Madame Passmore also contributed materially to the delight of the audience by gracefully swallowing several gold watches, a tuning-fork, and a small musical box—the strains of which were distinctly audible for three minutes after the act of deglutition. The normal course of the programme was now resumed with the reappearance of the "Siffleurs Parisiens," who, with an accompaniment of organ, euphonium, and zoetrope, gave their wonderfully chaste and exhilarating entertainment known as "Clapham Junction in a Fog,"

in which the whole *répertoire* of the modern engine-driver was simulated with the utmost possible dynamic intensity. Mr. Bavius Nixone, the gifted Australian tenor, who is nothing if not original, then charmed the vast assemblage by his wonderfully impressive rendering of the "Hailstone" chorus, arranged as a solo by Dr. Jasper Barnum. Hypersensitive critics may be found who object to this method of procedure as running counter to the intentions of the composer, but Mr. Nixone was completely vindicated by the result of his bold experiment. Clad in the uniform of a British admiral, he held the attention of the audience from the outset, and as the demand for an encore could not have been refused without risk of a riot, generously complied by giving Lemmens Quosh's great patriotic song, "Off to Filibuster." The grey dawn was just beginning to break as Mr. Storn-Barmer ascended the platform steps, and by the time he had ended his sumptuous and sonorous recitation of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, with, as an encore, "Augustus was a chubby lad," many of the audience were sleeping peacefully in their seats. It was with unfeigned regret that we were

obliged to tear ourselves away from this touching scene, the cast-iron rules which regulate the hours at which a daily paper goes to press being our only excuse for this apparent act of desertion. Before, however, concluding this necessarily imperfect notice of a brilliant and exquisitely artistic concert, it would savour of the basest ingratitude did we not express our deep indebtedness to the courtesy of the intelligent and urbane official who presides over the destinies of the cloak room. Thanks to his services, we were enabled to face the inclement atmosphere of the small hours in a hat and coat far better adapted to the rigours of the situation than those in which we had arrived some seven hours previously.

V.—THE IRRELEVANT

Dearest Dolabella,—You will, I am sure, be dying to hear about the dresses worn at the *Creation* — the oratorio, I mean — which was given by the Sacred Philharmonic Society at the Mendelssohn Hall last night. My dear Dolabella, Alpatti's dress was a perfect dream of delight. Just fancy: the bodice of crushed

Cape gooseberry satin, veiled in accordion-pleated chiffon—so appropriate to a musician!—of an Esterhazy brown tint; you know, of course, that dear old Haydn was music-master, or something or other, to one of the Esterhazys in the fifteenth century, or was it the seventeenth? The skirt was of very bright pink satin, with a hem of silver, and silver bands round the bodice, and at the back of the waist two *chou* bows of earthquake blue satin gave the whole thing ineffable *chic*. Miss Hilda Buttson, the contralto, was gowned in electric plum velvet, with salmon-coloured tabs across the shoulder. As the evening was rather chilly she wore a handsome opera wrap of pale gamboge plush richly trimmed with chinchilla. I was rather surprised to notice that Mr. Edward Davies, the tenor, only wore two studs in his enamelled shirt front; but I am told that it renders the production of his high A's much easier. Mr. John Stanley's dress waistcoat was cut a shade lower than usual, but otherwise he was as artistic and delightful as ever. Pretty Mrs. Ormolu was, as usual, a conspicuous figure in the stalls, where I also noticed Baron Boodle, Miss Minnie Mumm, M. Tostikoffski,

and dear old Lady Uvula Gargoyle. In fact, I had so much to do in "memorising" the dresses and nodding to friends that I had really no time to listen to the music, which was, of course, played and sung to perfection. And now, dear, let me give you the following original recipe for a tomato omelette ; you will find it excellent after singing, bicycling, or a "Mental Science" lecture :—Take ten tomatoes, and soak them in boiling water for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour, then stew them for $1\frac{1}{2}$ more, adding a pint of cream, three blades of mace, six pepper-corns, and a pair of pangofflins. Now take them carefully from the liquor and place them gently but firmly in a hair sieve, rub them through and fry in hot clean lard, arrange on a napkin, and give liberally to the poor.—Ever, dearest Dolabella, your dotting cousin, Araminta. P.S.—On looking casually at my programme I find that there is no contralto in the *Creation*, so I must have seen Miss Buttson somewhere else.

II

A MUSICAL CELEBRITY

WHEN the Editor asked me to interview the celebrated Cat of St. James's Hall (writes a musical correspondent), I pointed out that I had never interviewed anybody, and doubted my capacity to elicit the particular sort of information which would be acceptable to his readers. He, however, pooh-poohed these objections, declared that one must make a beginning somewhere, that anyone could converse with a cat, and so forth. So I pocketed my note-book, and went off to Chappell's to arrange an interview.

"Yes," said the assistant, "I think you'll find her at the Hall this morning. The afternoon's a bad time, as she generally attends the concerts; and to-day there's a new pianist making his *début*, a gentleman from Lapland, in

whom she is naturally taking a great deal of interest. But if you go there before two o'clock, inquire at the box-office, and send up your card, I think you'll have no difficulty."

I thanked him, made my way to the Hall, and on inquiring at the ticket office was referred to the fireman, who said he thought she was in the artists' room, but would go and see. He returned shortly with a favourable answer, conducted me up the stairs to the artists' room, and left me with the assurance that Puss would be in directly. In a few minutes she sailed gracefully in, and, after a friendly preliminary purr, observed :

"I must apologise for keeping you waiting, but the fact is they are practising a new quartet for the next 'Pop.,' and I couldn't leave until the end of the movement. You see, I always make a point of attending the rehearsals. Professor Kruse says it makes all the difference. And besides, there's a new 'cellist playing to-day, and he was rather nervous until I let him know that I liked his tone. However, I think I can leave them for a bit now. And so you want to interview me? Well, I suppose it's all right if Chappells say so. Please sit down."

I obeyed her command, and by way of a start, asked her how she became connected with St. James's Hall.

"Oh," replied the Cat, "I was always fond of music ; it is hereditary in my family. My great-grandfather and some of his friends used to have regular musical parties. They were the original Mice-ter singers, in fact. Then my father used to improvise nocturnes wonderfully—regular Moonlight Sonatas—and one day I strolled from my chambers in Jermyn Street, made friends with the fireman, and decided to live here ; and now I don't think they could get on without me. Lady Burdett Coutts gave me this collar, and when they presented Joachim with that new violin a few years ago, I presided at the ceremony—at least, I sat all the time in Miss Zimmermann's lap."

"I suppose you know all the artists intimately ?"

"Oh, yes ; and I know at once in the case of beginners whether they are going to be really successful or not. When Mr. Borwick made his *début* at the Philharmonic a few years ago, I was in the little room in the front where he was waiting to go on. He looked so anxious and

so young that I went up to him and rubbed myself against his leg. He saw at once what I meant, and said, 'Thank you, Puss,' so gratefully and sympathetically, that I felt sure he had the right stuff in him. Paderewski is a great friend of mine. I remember his first recital so well, when there were only about a hundred people in the hall. But I knew he was going to be a success. Very nervous, but very kind. He said to me, in Polish, 'Wish me good luck,' and I jumped up on his knee and purred *fortissimo*; and so, after the concert, he played the Cat's Fugue for me in the artists' room. It was one of the proudest moments of my life."

"That was indeed a compliment. I don't suppose all pianists are as amiable as that?"

"No, indeed. There was one little man, about whom some people made a great fuss, who kicked me out of the artists' room because I walked on to the platform while he was playing. But I had my revenge, for he broke down the very next time he appeared in public."

"Which do you like best, instrumentalists or vocalists?"

"Instrumentalists, of course. They are so

much less conceited, even when they've any amount of excuse for it. However, there are exceptions. Some pianists are dreadfully affected, and so cruel to the poor pianofortes. Why, I've sometimes heard the piano mew like a living creature, they hit it so hard. And then some of the singers are quite nice and simple. There's a great tall Irishman, I forget his name, who calls me 'Kitty of Coleraine,' and always asks for the latest news from Kilkenny. Very superstitious, like all Irishmen, as I know to my profit. He gave a concert the other day, and as I was the first person he met on coming into the artists' room, he took it as a good omen, and as the concert was a great success, he sent the fireman out to get me some cream. I've known many prima donnas, but none of them ever did as much for me. They are far too much taken up with talking about their digestions."

"May I ask who are your favourite composers?"

"That's rather an invidious question; and the fact is my taste is very catholic. I'm very fond of Purcell"—I noticed that the Cat pronounced it Purr-cell—"and adore Wagner.

You see, he was so fond of introducing animals into his operas ; indeed, I'm sure that if he had lived he would have written an opera with a cat in it. Just think what a splendid *leit-motif* there would have been. However, Humperdinck might do it very well. At any rate, *Hänsel and Gretel* has shown that he is capable of writing a fine opera on 'Puss in Boots.' "

"Do you think, then, that cats have exerted an appreciable influence on the development of music ?"

"I don't *think*, I'm sure of it. Why, weren't Persiani and Catalani two of the most famous prima donnas of the century? Doesn't one of the earliest poems in the English language tell of the astonishing effect produced on the brute creation by 'the Cat and the Fiddle'? Where would music have been without the fiddle? And what, I should like to know, would fiddles have done without cats? Then look at your singers. Just think how closely their high notes are modelled upon ours. I suppose you will say that it is a mere accidental resemblance. For myself, I'm quite sure these 'feline amenities,' as one of your critics calls them, are the result of conscious imitation, and very good imitation

too. More than once I've been taken in in this very hall."

"By the way," I asked, somewhat irrelevantly, "what do you think of the Queen's Hall in Langham Place?"

"I really can't say; I've nothing to do with it."

"But surely a Cat may look at a Queen's Hall?"

"Oh yes; but I never perform out of St. James's Hall. I've been to Covent Garden, though, to visit the Covent Garden Cat. Very musical she is too, I can tell you. When they did *Siegfried*, a couple of seasons ago, she came on in the Forest Scene to see if there was a real bird about. We've got a Bird at St. James's Hall, but he's a featherless biped who accompanies at the 'Pops.' I don't mind him, but I do object to that thrush which sings in the yard at the back, and echoes the singers sometimes in the most annoying way. I only wish I could get at it!"

"What do you think of all the prodigies who have been appearing of late seasons?"

"Well, I can't say I approve of the system. We don't allow kittens to give recitals, and

hitherto they have acquiesced patiently enough. However, there has been some talk lately of 'New Kittens,' or 'Revolting Kittens,' or some such nonsense; but I don't think it amounts to much."

"May I ask what you do in the 'off' season—in August and September, when there are no concerts?"

"Oh, by that time I'm as glad of a rest as the critics. Poor gentlemen, how sorry I am for them! In May and June, when the season is at its height, with five concerts at least a day, to say nothing of the opera, they must have an awful time of it running from one hall to another—St. James's, Queen's, Albert, Steinway, Bechstein, Erard's. I often wonder why they don't strike, or have a demonstration in Hyde Park. But you want to know what I do in August and September. Well, I generally pay visits. I've got several friends in St. James's Square, *protégées* of the kind crossing-sweeper, who is always glad to see me. And then the fireman sometimes takes me home. Oh, I assure you, I'm seldom at a loose end."

"May I ask if you have often been interviewed before?"

“Not often ; but I once supplied the *Cat's Cradle* with a few autobiographical details. You know, it was an ancestor of mine who was the hero of the memorable episode immortalised by *Punch*. He was something of a musical critic, and he is represented in the picture at a musical party surrounded by beauty, rank, and fashion, making his way to the door, having mistaken the strains of ‘Mee-ee-eet me once again’ for the voice of his commissariat agent.”

“And who is your favourite artist ?”

“Well, I think, perhaps, on the whole, Sarasate. You see, he’s a native of Catalonia.”

“Then perhaps you’ll be kind enough to tell me whether that story they tell of you and Sarasate is true.”

“Which story ?”

“Why, how Sarasate was once playing Mendelssohn’s violin concerto, and how, when he came to the last movement, you came up the steps from the artists’ room on to the platform and stayed there to the end, with your eyes fixed on the player and a most anxious expression on your face.”

“Well, why shouldn’t I come on to the platform ?”

“Why not? Only they say that it was so that you might be able to oblige him if he broke a string.”

“Fuff! What nonsense! Upon my purr I never heard anything so ridiculous. Why, my dear sir, cats don’t supply fiddle-strings any longer. It’s sheep! And now I must really ask you to excuse me, as I have an appointment with the critic of the *Daily Mews*. He generally comes to get some facts for his column of musical gossip on Friday. *Good morning.*”

III

CRITICS ON STRIKE

*(A Circumstantial Narrative in the manner of
Mr. H. G. Wells)*

PROVINCIAL amateurs cannot fail to have been struck by the extraordinary apparent dearth of concerts which prevailed in London from the middle of December to the middle of January. Unthinking non-musical observers may no doubt be tempted to ascribe this cessation of musical activities to the Christmas holidays, but a Campden Hill correspondent has placed us in the possession of a mass of information which places an entirely different and altogether astounding construction on the situation. Briefly put, his communication may be summarised as follows: During the whole of the period mentioned above concerts were being held at the rate of from fifty to seventy per

week, but owing to a resolute and practically unanimous lock-out on the part of the Musical Critics' Federation, none of these entertainments were noticed in any of the newspapers. Conferences were held between representatives of the Federation and of the Amalgamated Society of Singers and Players; appeals were made to Archbishops, Cardinals, and members of the Cabinet to effect a reconciliation between the conflicting parties; and even the German Emperor was approached by telegram in the hopes of his consenting to act as arbitrator in the dispute; but after a month's hostilities the A.S.S.P. triumphed all along the line, the critics returned to work, and the *status quo* has been re-established in its integrity.

Inasmuch as the Great Strike was precipitated by the action of the critics, it may be as well at the outset to state as briefly as may be the grounds which induced them to take this momentous step, and the demands which they formulated as the indispensable preliminaries to resuming their normal functions. They pointed out that the number of concerts held in the metropolis had practically trebled in the space of the last thirty years, and that this

enormous multiplication of musical entertainments carried with it no corresponding increase in their emoluments. They further asserted that the conscientious discharge of his duties by a modern musical critic involved a simultaneous ubiquitousness on his part compared with which the exploits of Sir Boyle Roche's bird were the merest child's play, and that whereas a course of esoteric Buddhism might possibly provide them with *one* astral body, three or four at the least would be required to meet the exigencies of the situation. Failing this resource, they were obliged to rush from one concert hall to another in a manner which not only imposed a severe tax on their wardrobe and physique, but was incompatible with that mental habit of equanimity so essential to the dispassionate discharge of their critical functions. These charges constituted the *gravamen* of their indictment, but a host of minor complaints were also preferred. For example, it was pointed out that the inclusion of a host of new features in so-called musical entertainments—dancing, recitations, “cantillation,” etc.—entailed on the musical critic studies of an encyclopædic range, in order to keep pace

with this expansive construction of the term "concert." The ordinary resources of their critical terminology were, in consequence, exhausted by the strain. They dwelt, again, upon the notorious perversity displayed by certain performers for deviating from the vernacular and singing in a variety of foreign and outlandish tongues. In particular they instanced the outrageous and extravagant versatility of one popular bass singer, who, at one of his recitals, sang in French, German, Italian, English, Modern Greek, and the Irish brogue! Where was this to end? Were they to spend their hard-earned leisure in mastering Patagonian, Japanese, Bohemian, and Matabele, in order to keep pace with this morbid craze for preposterous polyglottism? Finally, they denounced in scathing terms the recrudescence of the prodigy nuisance, the abuse of encores, the introduction into the concert-room of the semi-obscurity of Bayreuth, and roundly declared that unless their demands were conceded they would absolutely refuse to notice any concerts whatsoever within or without the four-mile radius. The irreducible minimum of these demands was ultimately formulated as follows:—

(1) An Eight-Concert Week, allowing two concerts for Saturdays, exclusive of operatic performances.

(2) No singer to be allowed to perform in more than three languages, or two, if one be extra-European.

(3) No performer to be allowed to appear in public under the age of eight, unless the pianoforte be fitted with a patent incubator.

(4) No concert to last more than two hours.

(5) No conjuring, contortion, prize-fighting, "imitations," thought-reading, or bicycle-riding to be allowed at ballad or classical concerts.

The effect produced by this announcement, which was formally communicated to the Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Singers and Players, can better be imagined than described. Six days' grace were allowed for the consideration of the ultimatum, and during those six days it is not too much to say that musical London was in a state of positive ferment. But the A.S.S.P. never wavered for a moment. It is asserted, indeed, that two weak-kneed trombone players and a suburban tenor named Tremolini advocated a conciliatory policy, but with these exceptions the

members were unanimous in repudiating the demands of the critics. In support of this *non-possumus* attitude they adduced a multitude of undoubtedly cogent and formidable arguments. As regards the Eight-Concert Week, they pointed out that unless concerts were to last all day, it would reduce their opportunities of public appearance on an average to about once in two years—which was absurd. Turning to the linguistic problem, they declared that polyglot performers were a logical and indisputable outcome of Imperial expansion, the modern passion for foreign travel, and, finally, of the widespread recognition of the principle of nationality in music. The boycotting of performers under the age of eight years they stigmatised as a most arbitrary and unprincipled attempt to stifle the natural efflorescence of genius, and a flagrant violation of the dictum *maxima debetur pueris reverentia*. It was also ludicrously inconsistent with the popular movement now on foot to include Baby Suffrage as one of the foremost planks in the programme of the Radical Party. As to demands (4) and (5), they were beneath the dignity of detailed discussion. In a word, the

ultimatum of the critics was rejected *in toto* and the Great Strike began.

It might have been supposed that in regard to organisation the advantages would have been all on the side of the critics, owing to their being a much smaller body. But as a matter of fact the solidarity of the performers was unshaken from the outset, while a certain amount of suspicion attached to the attitude of some of the critics. This involved the "picketing" of the principal concert halls of the metropolis, and in the foggy weather which prevailed about Christmas the inclemency of the atmosphere told heavily on the constitutions of the members of the federation. An unfortunate incident which occurred outside St. James's Hall, when the representative of the *Brixton Sentinel*, who was suspected of being a "black leg," was roughly handled by his colleagues, rescued by the police, and conveyed away in a motor-cab, created a painful impression; and to make matters worse, the proprietors of certain newspapers, instead of supporting their representatives, stopped their salaries as long as they refused to send in their "copy." Again, the performers, revelling in the con-

sciousness of their freedom from censorship, indulged in the most extravagant eccentricities. Thus one popular pianist created a great sensation by giving a concert at which the pianoforte was supported on the back of a strong man, while a vocal recital was held at Queen's Hall in which all the songs were sung in Esperanto to the accompaniment of a steam barrel-organ. The public, instead of discountenancing these extravagancies, flocked to witness them in unheard of numbers, and the free list was entirely suspended. It was at this stage of the conflict that the Kaiser was approached by some benevolent amateurs with a view to his acting as arbitrator, but his prompt answer, "I raise my glass to the heroic opponents of the reptile press—WILHELM," obviously precluded the possibility of his adopting a judicial attitude. Lord Lansdowne declined to intervene, on the ground that the failure of the concert of Europe had indisposed him to undertake any further efforts in the interests of harmony.

As for the memorable but abortive conference between the representatives of the critics and the artists, which lasted from the 7th

to the 13th of January, a brief outline of what took place must suffice. A profound impression was created by the pathetic appeal of that accomplished writer, Mr. Vernon Pshaw, who described how he had attended four concerts on the same afternoon, with the result that he not only lost his umbrella, but got the programmes so mixed up in his head that he found it almost impossible to write a notice of any of them. Mr. Albert Berkeley described how in his heroic efforts to bicycle from St. James's Hall, after hearing a new vocalist, to the Queen's Hall, in time to hear a new violinist, he collided with a sandwich-man, was summoned for "scorching," and had to pay, in addition to the fine and costs, a handsome solatium to the injured man. The arguments already set forth at the beginning of this article were restated with no lack of energy and eloquence; but the artists, relying on the support of the public, and exhilarated by the Kaiser's telegram, refused to give way on any single point. Financially their position had improved, while that of the critics had deteriorated. From acting on the defensive, they were now the aggressors, and showed no disposition to deny

themselves the fruits of victory. Still, on one or two points they were prepared to give way. Contortionists were banished from the concert platform, and a Roumanian baritone, who had announced a vocal recital, at which he would sing while performing on the trapeze, was ordered to amend his programme. It was proposed that the age for the appearance of infant prodigies (with incubator), fixed by the critics at eight, should be reduced to four. The eight-concert week was rejected, but it was suggested as a compromise that no critic need attend more than four concerts in the same day, or more than three in the same afternoon. As regards the linguistic question, the artists offered to sacrifice Sanskrit, Mæso-Gothic, Coptic, Mingrelian, Phuphluntine, Salicylic, Dalecarlian, Carthaginian, Koumiss, Pyro-Gallic, and the Ballybunnion dialect of North Kerry. That the critics were so infatuated as to reject these generous terms will hardly be credited, but it is none the less true.

Over the final scenes of this terrible feud we gladly draw a veil. The stubborn refusal of the critics to withdraw an iota of their demands, followed suddenly and unaccountably by their

utter collapse and abject surrender, will ever remain one of the most extraordinary psychological puzzles of this or any other century. Various explanations, more or less plausible, have been put forward, the most convincing being that which attributes this change of front to the collective interference of the critics' wives. Anyhow, the fact remains that by 15th January they were back at their work, and the notices which appeared in the newspaper issues of Monday, 17th January, contained no traces of that dissatisfaction which had prompted the lock-out a month or so previously. It may be that this calm is deceptive, like that which precedes a storm, and we are therefore glad to hear it rumoured that a prominent M.P. intends at an early date to recommend the formation of a permanent board of arbitration for the settlement of such disputes as that which has recently convulsed the musical world.

IV

MUSICAL REFORMATORIES

By the courtesy of a distinguished sociological philanthropist, who for the time being desires his name to be kept a secret, we are enabled to lay before our readers the outlines of an important and entirely novel scheme for accelerating the advent of the moral millennium.

This is nothing less than the establishment of what he describes as a Musical Reformatory, in which the obsolete and inhuman methods of the crank and treadmill, oakum-picking and solitary confinement, will be replaced by an elaborately graded system of musical punishments.

It is a notorious fact that every one, no matter how cultivated or uncultivated his musical instincts may be, can be made to suffer tortures by musical means. These, of

course, vary in every individual case, and the procedure under the new penal code will involve the testing of the offender with a view to ascertaining his peculiar musical aversion, on the discovery of which, sentence will be passed in proportion to the gravity of the offence and the power of endurance of the culprit.

In some cases this preliminary investigation is obviously unnecessary. For example, it is notorious that burglars, bargees, and butchers are devoted to simple ballads, but that they experience incredible agony on listening to the posthumous quartets of Beethoven. Indeed, it is computed by Professor Vallombroso that more suffering can be inflicted on a healthy bandit by forcing him to listen to classical chamber music for two hours on end than by condemning him to six months' solitary confinement. On the other hand, it is equally notorious that the whole tribe of Wagnerolaters regard a ballad concert as *anathema maranatha*. Suppose, then, to take a concrete example, that an unscrupulous financier has forged a cheque for £50,000, or been guilty of embezzlement on a Jabezian scale, and is

known or proved to be a devout disciple of the Bayreuth master—let it never be forgotten by those who seek to discover an indissoluble bond between music and morality that Nero conclusively proved in his person the possibility of a complete divorce between virtue and virtuosity—then instead of being incarcerated for seven or fourteen years, he will be amply punished by being ordered to attend three ballad concerts a week for three months, *at which every number in the programme is encored*. Robbery with violence will no longer be punished with the lash. If the criminal can be shown to possess a refined and fastidious musical taste he will be sentenced to fifty *Intermezzi*—i.e. to attend fifty consecutive performances of the Intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana* straight off the reel. If, *per contra*, his musical tastes are of a Philistinish order, he will be ordered to attend rehearsals of the scenes in which the Wanderer figures, or a performance of Beethoven's Mass in D, or of Brahms's Fourth Symphony. Or take yet another case. Suppose a musical critic to have committed manslaughter—we say "suppose," for of course musical critics are, *ex hypothesi*,

incapable of any deeds of violence—in that case the requirements of justice would probably be adequately satisfied by condemning the culprit to a six months' course of musical *soirées* in private houses, at every one of which the Preislied will be sung by an amateur tenor. If the offender should chance to be a literary man, his punishment should be administered by a piano-organist or German band; if a decadent, he should be forced to hear nothing but Handel or early Verdi; if a purist, he should be condemned to listen to programmes exclusively composed of transcriptions and bedevilled versions of classical pieces—"hyphen-music," as it might be called from the mode in which this posthumous collaboration is commonly expressed.

How easy it would be to make the punishment fit the crime, or, rather, the temperament of the criminal, is, we think, sufficiently illustrated in the foregoing paragraph. But a further and collateral advantage of the system yet remains to be indicated. We have no hesitation in saying that the establishment of such Musical Reformatories would go a long way towards solving that problem which at

present occupies the serious attention of all who are interested in the future of the art—the over-production of executants. An extensive staff of performers would be necessary for the efficient carrying out of all sentences, and regular and remunerative employment would thus be found by the State for many artists who at present find the greatest difficulty in eking out a livelihood. What is more, there would be room for executants of every degree of skill and talent, the services of rudimentary amateurs being invaluable for the punishment of sensitively organised criminals of keen artistic tastes—the combination of an admirable judgment in the domain of æsthetics with an imperfect moral sense will be familiar to all students of the Renaissance period—while, on the other hand, the display of unbridled virtuosity is known to exert a peculiarly exasperating effect on persons of a coarse-fibred and Philistine nature. Then the system would lend itself excellently to the formation of honorific official designations, somewhat on the German pattern, such as State Ballad-singer to Holloway Gaol, or Principal Bassoonist at Broadmoor, or Chief Convict Contralto at Pentonville. Think,

too, of the impetus which the adoption of this scheme would give to modern composers, especially composers of operatic and programme music, as soon as official and practical recognition was given to the penological aspect of music! Think of the enthusiasm with which some modern writers would rise to the occasion if the Government were to offer a prize of £100 for the best symphonic poem designed to deter fraudulent trustees from a continuance in their nefarious practices, or for a quartet calculated to excite remorse in the bosoms of hardened housebreakers. Think of the crop of moral one-act operas—what a change from the present type!—and hortatory ballads that would spring into existence under the new *régime*.

There remains, in conclusion, the interesting and important question whether the prisoners should be allowed themselves to take part in the musical performances designed for their correction or amelioration. One could imagine that in some cases it might have a very salutary effect, while in others no greater punishment could be devised than to oblige a criminal to practise five-finger exercises or to master the

complicated fingering of the oboe or clarinet. The habit of cropping the hair of convicts, again, suggests itself as likely to require consideration in this context, from the well-defined ratio that is known to exist between the extent of an executant's virtuosity and the length of his hair. These, however, are matters of detail. For the present it is enough to have set forth in general terms the outlines of a scheme which, if duly carried out, can hardly fail to exert a profound influence on the well-being of the community.

V

PASTIMES FOR MUSICIANS

(*With acknowledgments to the "Daily Telegraph"*)

THE subject of musicians' pastimes can obviously be treated in several ways, and we have no doubt that the most popular method of handling it would be to develop the brief information given under the heading "Recreations" in the new edition of *Who's Who*, on the lines of the personal paragraphs in the penny weekly papers. As thus : "Mlle. Corisande Stockdolloger, the beautiful blue-eyed pianist from Tipperusalem (Ga.), is passionately fond of the catapult, and has been known to floor a bobolink at a hundred yards." Or again : "M. Vladimir Tchitchikoff, the great Siberian basso, keeps himself in training for the arduous rôle of 'Bulbo,' in the *Blind Boxer of*

Batoum, by punching the ball for three hours daily." Or, once more : "Signor Salamandro Squarcione, by way of getting local colour for his next one-act opera, has applied for and obtained the post of electrocutionist to the State of Arkansas." This method, as we have already admitted, has divided attractions. There is something indescribably soothing to the ordinary person in being thus, as it were, led behind the scenes and confronted with the spectacle of Apollo with his bow unbent, of genius at play. One can cheerfully dispense with a knowledge of Verdi's music so long as one knows, on the authority of *Great Snips*, that he was an adept at spillikins. It matters little whether one has heard Signor Tam-Tamagnifico or not provided one has the assurance of the *Keyhole* that he measures nineteen inches round the biceps and always practises with dumb-bells before entering his matutinal tub. But tempting as this field of inquiry unquestionably is, we must reluctantly leave it to writers better equipped than ourselves for the collection of these thrilling personalia, and confine ourselves to a general discussion of the pastimes best suited to the members of the various branches of the musical profession.

That it is desirable for musicians to alternate the labours of their calling with indulgence in recreative pastimes is a proposition which commands universal assent. To say nothing of the venerable maxim which emphasises with a painfully monosyllabic simplicity the intellectual hebetude engendered by a too assiduous devotion to study, we live in so athletic an age that no self-respecting individual can venture to assert his insensibility to the fascinations of out-door recreation. Apart from which it is notorious that one large and important class of musicians—we refer to the tribe of vocalists—are inconveniently prone to the accumulation of adipose tissue. On both of these grounds exercise is to be commended, and exercise is seldom so agreeable as when it involves participation in a game of pastime. Descending from generalities to particulars, we are naturally confronted at the outset by the claims of the national game *par excellence*, cricket. And, on the face of it, there is a peculiar affinity between the disciples of St. Cecilia and the votaries of the great summer game, seeing that both are intimately concerned with “scores.” Further investigation, however, proves this con-

nection to be somewhat misleading. Cricket is all very well for the composers or compilers of scores, but it is eminently unsuitable for the interpreters thereof. Any one who has examined the hands of a great professional or amateur wicket-keeper will speedily come to the conclusion that this post is not fitted for a Sarasate or a Paderewski, or, in fine, for any aspirant to instrumental virtuosity. And the same remarks, with some modification, apply to batting, fielding, and even umpiring. There is no reason why singers should not play cricket in moderation, but as for instrumentalists, the only function in connection with the game which they can fill with impunity is that of scorer. Even umpires are liable to be "cut over" by a hard return or a hit to square leg. Rugby football, again, is, we fear, out of the question, though the Association game ought to be useful in developing the agility of organists in the department of pedal playing, while lawn tennis ought to afford ample opportunities for distinction to the same class of musicians, owing to their experience in taking all manner of "services." But the two games which above all others seem to lend themselves most happily

to the requirements and limitations of musicians are golf and croquet. On the merits and beauties and infinite variety of the "Royal and Ancient Game" it is unnecessary to expatiate at this time of day. From the point of view of the musician, however, it has the advantage that it does not involve any violent strain, and is practically free from the element of danger. Professor Karl Pearson, the eminent mathematician and philosopher, has recently discussed the chances of death in an elaborate essay, and no doubt would be prepared to supply a formula suited to the requirements of the timorous aspirant to golfing honours. We feel sure that it would be a highly reassuring formula. People have been killed at golf, but, if we mistake not, they have been more often spectators than participants in the game. For the rest, the use of the clubs is not likely to interfere with the suppleness of hand so essential to the executant; while the vicissitudes of the game afford splendid scope for the indulgence by vocalists in impassioned declamation. We can imagine no better preparation for the ideal rendering of a part which calls for a display of fury, despair, or indignation, than a few minutes spent in

ineffectual efforts to exhume the embedded Haskell. Finally, there remains croquet, which, whatever may be its intrinsic merits as a pastime, is at all points irreproachable as a recreation for musicians of all branches and ages. The infant prodigy, the prima donna, and the double-bassoonist can all take part in this blameless and innocuous pastime, with the knowledge that the utmost risk which is run is that of hitting your partner or your opponent instead of the ball. And there are moments when the latter calamity is positively calculated to inspire satisfaction rather than sorrow in the striker.

VI

MUSIC FOR ANIMALS

IN Southey's *Commonplace Book* there is an amusing entry relating to a wealthy nobleman in the Low Countries who, once a month, regaled all his horses—and he kept a large number—with a concert of orchestral music performed by his private band. The reference is tantalising, however, in that it gives no details as to the exact pieces performed and their respective effect upon the audience; but we learn that the nobleman, who was either a humorist or an eccentric, was under the impression that it was good for their health, and we have no doubt that in the matter of attention and general courtesy the noble animals compared most favourably with, say, an audience of fashionable folk, such as those at Baron de Bunsen's, as described in Sir Charles Hallé's memoirs. Several

years ago a writer in one of the weekly journals gave, under the heading of "Orpheus at the Zoo," an interesting account of the effect of music on beasts in captivity, which later on was followed up by an exceedingly entertaining paper in the *Orchestral Association Gazette*. Many of us have, no doubt, witnessed the ludicrous experiment of making a dog sing to the accompaniment of a pianoforte or other musical instrument. The present writer remembers very well one Skye terrier who would follow (approximately) the course of a melody when played on a harmonium. His voice was agonising in quality and atrocious in production, but he seemed rather proud of his accomplishment. It has probably fallen to the lot of other readers to notice how a dog, which has lain peacefully on the rug during a pianoforte solo, will break forth into dismal ululations when some one begins to sing or play the violin. But such crude and unconvincing performances are thrown entirely into the shade by the critical acumen of a dog belonging to a modern pianist, mentioned in the article in question. This animal, we learn, would listen attentively to Op. 19 of Dussek until the forty-eighth bar

was reached, when the discord at that point drove it away yelping to a hiding-place beneath the chair or table. This anecdote prompts one to wonder what Wagner's dogs—to which he was notoriously devoted—thought of his harmonies. The biographies are mute on this point, but then it is only fair to recall the fact that Wagner composed silently. Otherwise we should have been quite prepared to learn that the verdict was unfavourable. For just as no man is a hero to his valet, no great composer is likely to be appreciated—as such—by his faithful hound. And then we must remember that, although there are some points of contact between man and beast in regard to music and sounds generally, our standpoint differs physiologically and æsthetically from theirs. Take, for example, the rapture displayed by cats in their concerted vocal music, which, to the well-regulated human being, is nothing short of the abomination of desolation. Well, cats probably think much the same of our most exquisite efforts. We gather from "Professor" Garner's remarkable and romantic work on Chimpanzees and Gorillas that of all the appalling sounds that are heard on the face of this earth the

hoot *de poitrine* of the gorilla is by far the most horrific. It transcends the united efforts of Signor Tamagno and Sister Mary Jane. But our inability to enjoy it is largely due to human prejudice. If Professor Garner had remained long enough in his steel cage in the wilderness to master the simian language in its entirety, he would probably have learnt in time to take the same pleasure in the gorilla's top notes that home-keeping amateurs take in the silvery tones of Sarasate's fiddle or the siren strains of Madame Melba's voice.

On the whole, it must be admitted that animals and birds are much more appreciative of our music than we are of theirs, for when we do like it we reward the executant by shutting him up in a cage for life. How much more gracious and genial than our so-called humanity is the behaviour of the elephant of the Jardin des Plantes, in whose honour a concert was once organised! A set of brilliant variations for violin solo made no impression on the elephant, who remained equally unmoved during the performance of one of Boccherini's quartets. But when a distinguished violinist gave the simple air "O ma musette" the animal "evinced great

pleasure." The predilection thus displayed for the school of tender sentiment "induced the horn player, Duvernay, to oblige with 'Charmante Gabrielle.' The magic notes of his horn drew the beast nearer and nearer, marking the time all the while with its ponderous trunk and occasionally roaring in unison. Finally, it was almost the cause of hampering the movements of Duvernay, whom it attempted to caress." What a charming picture is here given of elephantine condescension, and what a vista it opens up of new combinations in concerted music! As, for example, a trio for giraffe, trombone, and bloodhound, or a quintet for elephant, gorilla, triangle, ostrich, and cobra *a cappella*. Think, again, of the exhilarating effect of a pianoforte duet, *à quatre pieds* for two kangaroos!

Whether animals like our music or not, there are very few of them, great or small, who remain entirely unaffected by it. The writer of the article from which we have already quoted vouches for the musical proclivities of the hare, and tells a story of a band of choristers out for a picnic on the banks of the Mersey, who observed the appearance of a hare whenever

they sang and its disappearance whenever they left off. Those movements by J. S. Bach to which the name of "double" is assigned ought certainly to appeal with peculiar force to the hare. The present writer has often seen seals on the South-West Coast of Ireland following a boat in which the passengers were singing, and it is recorded of a prisoner in the Bastille that the loneliness of his lot was materially solaced by the companionship of spiders, which he lured forth from their crannies by the notes of his flute. Mice and rats, again, are notoriously fond of music, and a recent writer on the subject states that mountebanks have been known to teach several of them to dance on a rope in perfect time to the tune of an old fiddle. *A propos* of animals keeping time to music, no one who has been to a circus can have failed to be struck by the admirable precision displayed by performing horses when going through their evolutions to the accompaniment of the band. We know that sceptics say, "Oh, it isn't the horses who keep time to the music; *it is the music that is played so as to keep time with the horses*"! But surely this is not the case. Besides, the faculty in question is not really

indicative of a high level of intelligence at all. The rhythm sense is anterior to the sense of melody, as is conclusively proved by the accounts of savages who execute dances in the most perfect time, while their tunes may not be unfairly described as "songs without notes."

Further instances of the influence exercised by music on animals might be multiplied to an indefinite extent. It is almost an insult to the intelligence of our readers to recall the exploits of Orpheus, who is credited with having reduced the most savage animals to a state of comparative domesticity by the strains of his golden harp. The writer in the *Orchestral Association Gazette* mentions a certain H. Stephanus as giving an account of his having seen a lion leave his prey to listen to music, and there is the curious anecdote related by Playford of the herd of stags who were brought all the way out of Yorkshire to Hampton Court by two men who played the bagpipes and the violin. Need we mention the memorable achievement of the Pied Piper of Hamelin? Enough has been said to indicate that if the musical education of animals were systematically taken in hand, and conservatoires estab-

lished for their training under properly qualified professors, results of a most interesting and surprising character would probably be obtained. The only serious difficulty that we see in connection with this subject is that while the executive and appreciative faculties of brute creation might be cultivated to a high pitch, as auditors they labour under the crucial disadvantage of being unable to express their approval in a tangible form. Of course it is possible that in a few centuries animals may develop the financial sense, insist on being paid salaries for their services, and accumulate balances at the bank. But, as at present constituted, they only appeal, from the musical point of view, to the sympathies of disinterested and affluent amateurs.

THE END

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